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“Johnson started up and stood still. His Majesty approached him, and at once was courteously easy.”



BOSWELL'S  
LIFE OF JOHNSON.

ILLUSTRATED.



SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

VOL. II.

LONDON:  
ROUTLEDGE, WARNES, & ROUTLEDGE,  
FARRINGTON STREET.  
NEW YORK: 56, WALKER STREET.  
1859.



THE LIFE  
OF  
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

COMPREHENDING

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STUDIES AND NUMEROUS WORKS,  
IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER;

A SERIES OF HIS EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE AND CONVERSATIONS  
WITH MANY EMINENT PERSONS;

AND VARIOUS ORIGINAL PIECES OF HIS COMPOSITION, NEVER  
BEFORE PUBLISHED:

THE WHOLE EXHIBITING A VIEW OF LITERATURE AND LITERARY MEN IN GREAT BRITAIN,  
FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY DURING WHICH HE FLOURISHED.

By JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

A NEW EDITION,

ELUCIDATED BY COPIOUS NOTES,

AND ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS PORTRAITS, VIEWS, AND CHARACTERISTIC DESIGNS,  
ENGRAVED FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

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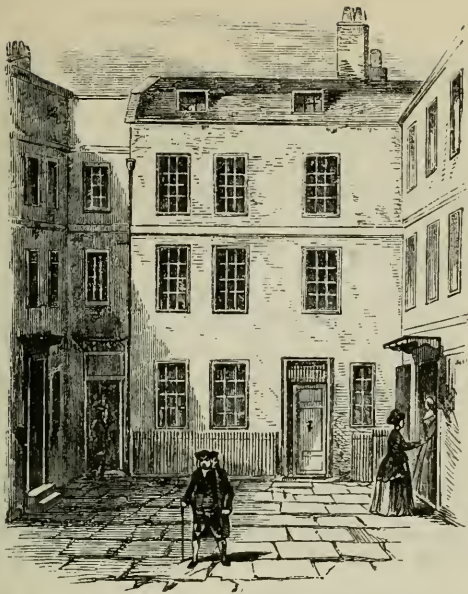


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JOHNSON'S HOUSE IN JOHNSON'S-COURT.

## CHAPTER I.—1766—1767.

BOSWELL RETURNS TO ENGLAND—VOLTAIRE'S COMPARISON OF POPE AND DRYDEN—GOLDSMITH'S "TRAVELLER," AND "DESERTED VILLAGE"—RENEWAL OF THE SUPPERS AT THE MITRE—JOHNSON'S OPINIONS OF ROUSSEAU—SPECIMENS OF HIS FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS—LETTERS TO BENNET LANGTON—JOHNSON'S CRITICISM ON THE LATIN IN BOSWELL'S THESIS—BOSWELL'S REPLY—PUBLICATION OF MRS. ANNA WILLIAMS'S MISCELLANIES—JOHNSON ADVOCATES THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE IN GAELIC—CUTHBERT SHAW—THE HON. THOMAS HERVEY.

IN 1764 and 1765 it should seem that Dr. Johnson was so busily employed with his edition of Shakspeare, as to have had little leisure for any other literary exertion, or, indeed, even for private correspondence. He did not favour me with a single letter for more than two years, for which it will appear that he afterwards apologised.

He was, however, at all times ready to give assistance to his friends, and others, in revising their works, and in writing for them, or greatly improving their dedications. In that courtly species of composition no man excelled Dr. Johnson. Though the loftiness of his mind prevented him from ever dedicating in his own person, he wrote a very great number of dedications for others. Some of these, the persons who were favoured with them, are unwilling should be mentioned, from a too

anxious apprehension, as I think, that they might be suspected of having received larger assistance; and some, after all the diligence I have bestowed, have escaped my inquiries. He told me, a great many years ago, "he believed he had dedicated to all the royal family round;" and it was indifferent to him what was the subject of the work dedicated, provided it were innocent. He once dedicated some music for the German flute, to Edward Duke of York. In writing dedications for others, he considered himself as by no means speaking his own sentiments.

Notwithstanding his long silence, I never omitted to write to him, when I had anything worthy of communicating. I generally kept copies of my letters to him, that I might have a full view of our correspondence, and never be at a loss to understand any reference in his letters. He kept the greater part of mine very carefully; and a short time before his death was attentive enough to seal them up in bundles, and order them to be delivered to me, which was accordingly done. Amongst them I found one, of which I had not made a copy, and which I own I read with pleasure at the distance of almost twenty years. It is dated November, 1765, at the palace of Pascal Paoli, in Corte, the capital of Corsica, and is full of generous enthusiasm. After giving a sketch of what I had seen and heard in that island, it proceeded thus:—"I dare to call this a spirited tour. I dare to challenge your approbation."

This letter produced the following answer, which I found on my arrival at Paris:—

À M. M. BOSWELL, CHEZ M. WATERS, BANQUIER, À PARIS.

"DEAR SIR,

*Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, January 14, 1796.*

"Apologies are seldom of any use. We will delay till your arrival the reasons, good or bad, which have made me such a sparing and ungrateful correspondent. Be assured, for the present, that nothing has lessened either the esteem or love with which I dismissed you at Harwich. Both have been increased by all that I have been told of you by yourself or others; and when you return, you will return to an unaltered, and, I hope, unalterable friend.

"All that you have to fear from me is the vexation of disappointing me. No man loves to frustrate expectations which have been formed in his favour; and the pleasure which I promise myself from your journals and remarks is so great, that perhaps no degree of attention or discernment will be sufficient to afford it.

"Come home, however, and take your chance. I long to see you, and to hear you; and hope that we shall not be so long separated again. Come home, and expect such welcome as is due to him, whom a wise and noble curiosity has led, where perhaps no native of this country ever was before.

"I have no news to tell you that can deserve your notice; nor would I willingly lessen the pleasure that any novelty may give you at your return. I am afraid we shall find it difficult to keep among us a mind which has been so long feasted with variety. But let us try what esteem and kindness can effect.

“As your father’s liberality has indulged you with so long a ramble, I doubt not but you will think his sickness, or even his desire to see you, a sufficient reason for hastening your return. The longer we live, and the more we think, the higher value we learn to put on the friendship and tenderness of parents and of friends. Parents we can have but once; and he promises himself too much, who enters life with the expectation of finding many friends. Upon some motive, I hope, that you will be here soon; and am willing to think that it will be an inducement to your return, that it is sincerely desired by,

“Dear Sir, your affectionate and humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

I returned to London in February, and found Dr. Johnson in a good house in Johnson’s-court, Fleet-street, in which he had accommodated Miss Williams with an apartment on the ground-floor, while Mr. Levett occupied his post in the garret; his faithful Francis was still attending upon him. He received me with much kindness. The fragments of our first conversation, which I have preserved, are these: I told him that Voltaire, in a conversation with me, had distinguished Pope and Dryden thus:—“Pope drives a handsome chariot, with a couple of neat trim nags; Dryden a coach, and six stately horses.” JOHNSON: “Why Sir, the truth is, they both drive coaches and six; but Dryden’s horses are either galloping or stumbling: Pope’s go at a steady even trot.”<sup>1</sup> He said of Goldsmith’s “Traveller,” which had been published in my absence, “There has not been so fine a poem since Pope’s time.”

And here it is proper to settle, with authentic precision, what has long floated in public report, as to Johnson’s being himself the author of a considerable part of that poem. Much, no doubt, both of the sentiments and expression were derived from conversation with him: and it was certainly submitted to his friendly revision: but in the year 1783, he at my request marked with a pencil the lines which he had furnished, which are only line 420th,

“To stop too fearful, and too faint to go;”

and the concluding ten lines, except the last couplet but one, which I distinguish by the italic character:—

“How small of all that human hearts endure,  
That part which kings or laws can cause or cure.  
Still to ourselves in every place consign’d,  
Our own felicity we make or find;  
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,  
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy:

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that Mr. Gray (“Ode on the Progress of Poesy”) has employed somewhat the same image to characterise Dryden. He, indeed, furnishes his car with but two horses; but they are of “ethereal race:”

“Behold where Dryden’s less presumptuous car,  
Wide o’er the fields of glory bear  
Two coursers of ethereal race,  
With necks in thunder cloth’d, and long-resounding pace.”—BOSWELL.

*The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,  
 Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,  
 To men remote from power, but rarely known,  
 Leave reason, faith, and conscience, all our own."*

He added, "These are all of which I can be sure." They bear a small proportion to the whole, which consists of four hundred and thirty-eight verses. Goldsmith, in the couplet which he inserted, mentions *Luke* as a person well known, and superficial readers have passed it over quite smoothly; while those of more attention have been as much perplexed by *Luke* as by *Lydiat*, in "The Vanity of Human Wishes." The truth is, that Goldsmith himself was in a mistake. In the "*Respublica Hungarica*," there is an account of a desperate rebellion in the year 1514, headed by two brothers of the name of *Zeck*, George and Luke. When it was quelled, *George*, not *Luke*, was punished by his head being encircled with a red-hot iron crown: "*Coronâ candescente ferreâ coronatur.*" The same severity of torture was exercised on the Earl of Athol, one of the murderers of King James I. of Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Johnson at the same time favoured me by marking the lines which he furnished to Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," which are only the last four:—

' That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,  
 As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away :  
 While self-dependent power can time defy,  
 As rocks resist the billows and the sky."

Talking of education, "People have now-a-days," said he, "got a strange opinion that everything should be taught by lectures. Now, I cannot see that lectures can do so much good as reading the books from which the lectures are taken. I know nothing that can be best taught by lectures, except where experiments are to be shown. You may teach chemistry by lectures:—You might teach making of shoes by lectures!"

At night I supped with him at the Mitre tavern, that we might renew our social intimacy at the original place of meeting. But there was now a considerable difference in his way of living. Having had an illness, in which he was advised to leave off wine, he had, from that period, continued to abstain from it, and drink only water, or lemonade.

I told him that a foreign friend of his, whom I had met with abroad, was so wretchedly perverted to infidelity that he treated the hopes of immortality with brutal levity: and said, "As man dies like a dog, let him lie like a dog." JOHNSON: "If he dies like a dog, let him lie like a dog." I added, that this man said to me, "I hate mankind, for I think myself one of the best of them, and I know how bad I am."

<sup>1</sup> On the iron crown, see Mr. Steevens's note 7, on Act iv. sc. i. of "Richard III." It seems to be alluded to in "Macbeth," Act iv. sc. i. "Thy crown does sear, &c." See also Gough's "Camden," vol. iii. p. 396.—J. BLAKEWAY.

JOHNSON : " Sir, he must be very singular in his opinion if he thinks himself one of the best of men, for none of his friends think him so."—He said, " No honest man could be a deist, for no man could be so after a fair examination of the proofs of Christianity." I named Hume. JOHNSON : " No, Sir ; Hume owned to a clergyman in the bishopric of Durham that he had never read the New Testament with attention."—I mentioned Hume's notion, that all who are happy are equally happy ; a little Miss with a new gown at a dancing-school ball, a general at the head of a victorious army, and an orator after having made an eloquent speech in a great assembly. JOHNSON : " Sir, that all who are happy are equally happy, is not true. A peasant and a philosopher may be equally *satisfied*, but not equally *happy*. Happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable consciousness. A peasant has not capacity for having equal happiness with a philosopher." I remember this very question very happily illustrated in opposition to Hume, by the Rev. Mr. Robert Brown, at Utrecht. " A small drinking-glass and a large one," said he, " may be equally full : but the large one holds more than the small." <sup>1</sup>

Dr. Johnson was very kind this evening, and said to me, " You have now lived five-and-twenty years, and you have employed them well." " Alas, Sir," said I, " I fear not. Do I know history ? Do I know mathematics ? Do I know law ? " JOHNSON : " Why, Sir, though you may know no science so well as to be able to teach it, and no profession so well as to be able to follow it, your general mass of knowledge of books and men renders you very capable to make yourself master of any science, or fit yourself for any profession." I mentioned that a gay friend had advised me against being a lawyer, because I should be excelled by plodding blockheads. JOHNSON : " Why, Sir, in the formulary and statutory part of law, a plodding blockhead may excel ; but in the ingenious and rational part of it a plodding blockhead can never excel."

I talked of the mode adopted by some to rise in the world, by courting great men, and asked him whether he had ever submitted to it. JOHNSON : " Why, Sir, I never was near enough to great men to

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Hall, in discussing this subject, has the same image : " Yet so conceive of these heavenly degrees that the least is glorious. *So do these vessels differ, that are all full.*" Epistles, Dec. iii. cp. 6. " Of the different degrees of heavenly glory." This most learned and ingenious writer, however, was not the first who suggested this image ; for it is found also in an old book entitled " A Work worth the reading," by Charles Gibbon, 4to. 1591. In the fifth dialogue of this work, in which the question debated is, " whether there be degrees of glorie in heaven, or difference of paines in hell," one of the speakers observes, that " no doubt in the world to come, (where the least pleasure is unspeakable,) it cannot be but that he which hath bin most afflicted here, shall conceive and receive more exceeding joy than he which hath bin touched with lesse tribulation ; and yet the joys of heaven are fitlie compared to *vessels filled with licour of all quantities* ; for everie man shall have his full measure there." By " *all quantities*" this writer, who seems to refer to a still more ancient author than himself, I suppose, means *different* quantities.—MALONE.

court them. You may be prudently attached to great men, and yet independent. You are not to do what you think wrong; and, Sir, you are to calculate, and not to pay too dear for what you get. You must not give a shilling's worth of court for sixpence worth of good. But if you can get a shilling's worth of good for sixpence worth of court, you are a fool if you do not pay court."

He said, "If convents should be allowed at all, they should only be retreats for persons unable to serve the public, or who have served it. It is our first duty to serve society; and, after we have done that, we may attend wholly to the salvation of our own souls. A youthful passion for abstracted devotion should not be encouraged."

I introduced the subject of second sight, and other mysterious manifestations; the fulfilment of which, I suggested, might happen by chance. JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir, but they have happened so often, that mankind have agreed to think them not fortuitous."

I talked to him a great deal of what I had seen in Corsica, and of my intention to publish an account of it. He encouraged me by saying, "You cannot go to the bottom of the subject: but all that you tell us will be new to us. Give us as many anecdotes as you can."

Our next meeting at the Mitre was on Saturday the 15th of February, when I presented to him my old and most intimate friend, the Rev. Mr.

Temple, then of Cambridge. I having mentioned that I had passed some time with Rousseau, in his wild retreat, and having quoted some remark made by Mr. Wilkes, with whom I had spent many pleasant hours in Italy, Johnson said, sarcastically, "It seems, sir, you have kept very good company abroad, Rousseau and Wilkes!" Thinking it enough to defend one at a time, I said nothing as to my gay friend, but answered with a smile, "My dear Sir, you don't call Rousseau bad company. Do you really think *him* a bad man?" JOHNSON: "Sir, if you are talking jestingly of this, I don't talk with you. If you



ROUSSEAU.

mean to be serious, I think him one of the worst of men; a rascal, who ought to be hunted out of society, as he has been. Three or four nations have expelled him, and it is a shame that he is protected in this country." BOSWELL: "I don't deny, Sir, but that his novel may, perhaps, do harm; but I cannot think his intention was bad." JOHNSON: "Sir, that will not do. We cannot prove any man's intention to be bad. You may shoot a man through the head, and say you intended to miss him; but the judge will order you to be hanged. An alleged want of intention, when evil is committed, will not be



allowed in a court of justice. Rousseau, Sir, is a very bad man. I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I should like to have him work in the plantations." BOSWELL: "Sir, do you think him as bad a man as Voltaire?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them."

This violence seemed very strange to me, who had read many of Rousseau's animated writings with great pleasure, and even edification; had been much pleased with his society, and was just come from the continent where he was generally admired. Nor can I yet allow that he deserves the very severe censure which Johnson pronounced upon him. His absurd preference of savage to civilised life, and other singularities, are proofs rather of a defect in his understanding, than of any depravity in his heart. And notwithstanding the unfavourable opinion which many worthy men have expressed of his "*Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard*," I cannot help admiring it as the performance of a man full of sincere reverential submission to Divine mystery, though beset with perplexing doubts: a state of mind to be viewed with pity rather than with anger.

On his favourite subject of subordination, Johnson said, "So far is it from being true that men are naturally equal, that no two people can be half an hour together, but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other."

I mentioned the advice given us by philosophers, to console ourselves, when distressed or embarrassed, by thinking of those who are in a worse situation than ourselves. This, I observed, could not apply to all, for there must be some who have nobody worse than they are. JOHNSON: "Why, to be sure, Sir, there are; but they don't know it. There is no being so poor and so contemptible, who does not think there is somebody still poorer, and still more contemptible."

As my stay in London at this time was very short, I had not many opportunities of being with Dr. Johnson; but I felt my veneration for him in no degree lessened, by my having seen *multorum hominum more et urbes*. On the contrary, by having it in my power to compare him with many of the most celebrated persons of other countries, my admiration of his extraordinary mind was increased and confirmed.

The roughness, indeed, which sometimes appeared in his manners, was more striking to me now, from my having been accustomed to the studied, smooth, complying habits of the continent; and I clearly recognised in him, not without respect for his honest conscientious zeal, the same indignant and sarcastical mode of treating every attempt to unhinge or weaken good principles.

One evening, when a young gentleman teased him with an account of the infidelity of his servant, who, he said, would not believe the scriptures, because he could not read them in the original tongues, and

be sure that they were not invented:—"Why, foolish fellow," said Johnson, "has he any better authority for almost everything that he believes?" BOSWELL: "Then the vulgar, Sir, never can know they are right, but must submit themselves to the learned." JOHNSON: "To be sure, Sir. The vulgar are the children of the State, and must be taught like children." BOSWELL: "Then, Sir, a poor Turk must be a Mahometan, just as a poor Englishman must be a Christian?" JOHNSON: "Why, yes, Sir; and what then? This, now, is such stuff as I used to talk to my mother, when I first began to think myself a clever fellow; and she ought to have whipt me for it."

Another evening Dr. Goldsmith and I called on him, with the hope of prevailing on him to sup with us at the Mitre. We found him indisposed, and resolved not to go abroad. "Come, then," said Goldsmith, "we will not go to the Mitre to-night, since we cannot have the big man with us." Johnson then called for a bottle of port, of which Goldsmith and I partook, while our friend, now a water-drinker, sat by us. GOLDSMITH: "I think, Mr. Johnson, you don't go near the theatres now. You give yourself no more concern about a new play, than if you had never had anything to do with the stage." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, our tastes greatly alter. The lad does not care for the child's rattle, and the old man does not care for the young man's whore." GOLDSMITH: "Nay, Sir, but your Muse was not a whore." JOHNSON: "Sir, I do not think she was. But as we advance in the journey of life, we drop some of the things which have pleased us; whether it be that we are fatigued and don't choose to carry so many things any farther, or that we find other things which we like better." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, why don't you give us something in some other way?" GOLDSMITH: "Ay, Sir, we have a claim upon you." JOHNSON: "No, Sir, I am not obliged to do any more. No man is obliged to do as much as he can do. A man is to have part of his life to himself. If a soldier has fought a good many campaigns, he is not to be blamed if he retires to ease and tranquillity. A physician, who has practised long in a great city, may be excused if he retires to a small town and takes less practice. Now, Sir, the good I can do by my conversation bears the same proportion to the good I can do by my writings, that the practice of a physician, retired to a small town, does to his practice in a great city." BOSWELL: "But I wonder, Sir, you have not more pleasure in writing than in not writing." JOHNSON: "Sir, you *may* wonder."

He talked of making verses, and observed, "The great difficulty is, to know when you have made good ones. When composing, I have generally had them in my mind, perhaps fifty at a time, walking up and down in my room; and then I have written them down, and often, from laziness, have written only half lines. I have written a hundred lines in a day. I remember, I wrote a hundred lines of 'The Vanity of Human Wishes' in a day. Doctor (turning to Goldsmith), I am not quite idle;

I made one line t'other day ; but I made no more." GOLDSMITH : " Let us hear it ; we'll put a bad one to it." JOHNSON : " No, Sir ; I have forgot it."

Such specimens of the easy and playful conversation of the great Dr. Samuel Johnson, are, I think, to be prized, as exhibiting the little varieties of a mind so enlarged and so powerful when objects of consequence required its exertions, and as giving us a minute knowledge of his character and modes of thinking.

" TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT LANGTON, NEAR SPILSBY,  
LINCOLNSHIRE.

" DEAR SIR,

*March 9, 1766 ; Johnson's-court, Fleet-street.*

" What your friends have done, that from your departure till now nothing has been heard of you, none of us are able to inform the rest ; but as we are all neglected alike, no one thinks himself entitled to the privilege of complaint.

" I should have known nothing of you or of Langton, from the time that dear Miss Langton left us, had not I met Mr. Simpson, of Lincoln, one day in the street, by whom I was informed that Mr. Langton, your Mamma, and yourself, had been all ill, but that you were all recovered.

" That sickness should suspend your correspondence, I did not wonder ; but hoped that it would be renewed at your recovery.

" Since you will not inform us where you are, or how you live, I know not whether you desire to know any thing of us. However, I will tell you that THE CLUB subsists ; but we have the loss of Burke's company since he has been engaged in public business, in which he has gained more reputation than perhaps any man at his [first] appearance ever gained before. He made two speeches in the House for repealing the Stamp Act, which were publicly commended by Mr. Pitt, and have filled the town with wonder.

" Burke is a great man by nature, and is expected soon to attain civil greatness. I am grown greater too, for I have maintained the newspapers these many weeks ; and what



EDMUND BURKE.

is greater still, I have risen every morning since New-year's day, at about eight: when I was up, I have indeed done but little; yet it is no slight advancement to obtain for so many hours more the consciousness of being.

"I wish you were in my new study; I am now writing the first letter in it; I think it looks very pretty about me.

"Dyer<sup>1</sup> is constant at THE CLUB; Hawkins is remiss; I am not over diligent. Dr. Nugent, Dr. Goldsmith, and Mr. Reynolds, are very constant. Mr. Lye is printing his Saxon and Gothic Dictionary; all THE CLUB subscribes.

"You will pay my best respects to all my Lincolnshire friends.

"I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT LANGTON, NEAR SPILSBY,  
LINCOLNSHIRE.

"DEAR SIR,

May 10, 1766; *Johnson's-court, Fleet-street.*

"In supposing that I should be more than commonly affected by the death of Peregrine Langton,<sup>2</sup> you were not mistaken; he was one of those whom I loved at once by instinct and by reason. I have seldom indulged more hope of any thing than of being able to improve our acquaintance to friendship. Many a time have I placed myself again at Langton, and imagined the pleasure with which I should walk to Partney<sup>3</sup> in a summer morning; but this is no longer possible. We must now endeavour to preserve what is left us,—his example of piety and economy. I hope you make what inquiries you can, and write down what is told you. The little things which distinguish domestic characters are soon forgotten: if you delay to inquire, you will have no information; if you neglect to write, information will be vain.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Dyer, Esq., a most learned and ingenious member of the Literary Club, for whose understanding and attainments Dr. Johnson had great respect. He died Sept. 14, 1772. A more particular account of this gentleman may be found in a note on the "Life of Dryden," p. 186, prefixed to the edition of that great writer's Prose Works, in four volumes 8vo, 1800: in which his character is vindicated, and the very unfavourable and unjust representation of it, given by Sir John Hawkins in his "Life of Johnson," pp. 222—232, is minutely examined.—MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Langton's uncle.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> The place of residence of Mr. Peregrine Langton.—BOSWELL.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Langton did not disregard this counsel, but wrote the following account, which he has been pleased to communicate to me:—

"The circumstances of Mr. Peregrine Langton were these. He had an annuity for life of two hundred pounds per annum. He resided in a village in Lincolnshire; the rent of his house, with two or three small fields, was twenty-eight pounds; the county he lived in was not more than moderately cheap; his family consisted of a sister, who paid him eighteen pounds annually for her board, and a niece. The servants were two maids, and two men in livery. His common way of living, at his table, was three or four dishes; the appurtenances to his table were neat and handsome; he frequently entertained company at dinner, and then his table was well served with as many dishes as were usual at the tables of the other gentlemen in the neighbourhood. His own appearance, as to clothes, was genteelly neat and plain. He had always a postchaise, and kept three horses.

"Such, with the resources I have mentioned, was his way of living, which he did not suffer to employ his whole income; for he had always a sum of money lying by him for any extraordinary expenses that might arise. Some money he put into the stocks: at his death the sum he had there amounted to one hundred and fifty pounds. He purchased out of his

“His art of life certainly deserves to be known and studied. He lived in plenty and elegance upon an income which to many would appear indigent, and to most, scanty. How he lived, therefore, every man has an interest in knowing. His death, I hope, was peaceful; it was surely happy.

income his household furniture and linen, of which latter he had a very ample store; and, as I am assured by those that had very good means of knowing, not less than the tenth part of his income was set apart for charity: at the time of his death, the sum of twenty-five pounds was found, with a direction to be employed in such uses.

“He had laid down a plan of living proportioned to his income, and did not practise any extraordinary degree of parsimony, but endeavoured that in his family there should be plenty without waste. As an instance that this was his endeavour, it may be worth while to mention a method he took in regulating a proper allowance of malt liquor to be drunk in his family, that there might not be a deficiency, or any intemperate profusion. On a complaint made that his allowance, of a hogshead in a month, was not enough for his own family, he ordered the quantity of a hogshead to be put into bottles, had it locked up from the servants, and distributed out, every day, eight quarts, which is the quantity each day at one hogshead in a month; and told his servants, that if that did not suffice, he would allow them more; but, by this method, it appeared at once that the allowance was much more than sufficient for his small family; and this proved a clear conviction, that could not be answered, and saved all future dispute. He was, in general, very diligently and punctually attended and obeyed by his servants; he was very considerate as to the injunctions he gave, and explained them distinctly; and, at their first coming to his service, steadily exacted a close compliance with them, without any remission: and the servants finding this to be the case, soon grew habitually accustomed to the practice of their business, and then very little further attention was necessary. On extraordinary instances of good behaviour, or diligent service, he was not wanting in particular encouragements and presents above their wages; it is remarkable that he would permit their relations to visit them, and stay at his house two or three days at a time.

“The wonder, with most that hear an account of his economy, will be, how he was able, with such an income, to do so much, especially when it is considered that he paid for every thing he had. He had no land, except the two or three small fields which I have said he rented; and, instead of gaining anything by their produce, I have reason to think he lost by them; however, they furnished him with no further assistance towards his house-keeping, than grass for his horses (not hay, for that I know he bought), and for two cows. Every Monday morning he settled his family accounts, and so kept up a constant attention to the confining his expenses within his income; and to do it more exactly, compared those expenses with a computation he had made, how much that income would afford him every week and day of the year. One of his economical practices was, as soon as any repair was wanting in or about his house, to have it immediately performed. When he had money to spare, he chose to lay in a provision of linen or clothes, or any other necessaries; as then, he said, he could afford it, which he might not be so well able to do when the actual want came in consequence of which method, he had a considerable supply of necessary articles lying by him, beside what was in use.

“But the main particular that seems to have enabled him to do so much with his income, was, that he paid for everything as soon as he had it, except, alone, what were current accounts, such as rent for his house, and servants' wages; and these he paid at the stated times with the utmost exactness. He gave notice to the tradesmen of the neighbouring market-towns that they should no longer have his custom, if they let any of his servants have anything without their paying for it. Thus he put it out of his power to commit those imprudences to which those are liable that defer their payments by using their money some other way than where it ought to go. And whatever money he had by him, he knew that it was not demanded elsewhere, but that he might safely employ it as he pleased.

“His example was confined, by the sequestered place of his abode, to the observation of few, though his prudence and virtue would have made it valuable to all who could have known it. These few particulars, which I knew myself, or have obtained from those who lived with him, may afford instruction, and be an incentive to that wise art of living, which he so successfully practised.”—BOSWELL.

"I wish I had written sooner, lest, writing now, I should renew your grief; but I would not forbear saying what I have now said.

"This loss is, I hope, the only misfortune of a family to whom no misfortune at all should happen, if my wishes could avert it. Let me know how you all go on. Has Mr. Langton got him the little horse that I recommended? It would do him good to ride about his estate in fine weather.

"Be pleased to make my compliments to Mrs. Langton, and to dear Miss Langton, and Miss Di, and Miss Juliet, and to everybody else.

"THE CLUB holds very well together. Monday is my night.<sup>1</sup> I continue to rise tolerably well, and read more than I did. I hope something will yet come on it. I am, Sir,

"Your most affectionate servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

After I had been some time in Scotland, I mentioned to him in a letter, that "on my first return to my native country, after some years of absence, I was told of a vast number of my acquaintance who were all gone to the land of forgetfulness, and I found myself like a man stalking over a field of battle, who every moment perceives some one lying dead." I complained of irresolution, and mentioned my having made a vow as a security for good conduct. I wrote to him again without being able to move his indolence: nor did I hear from him till he had received a copy of my inaugural Exercise, or Thesis in Civil Law, which I published at my admission as an Advocate, as is the custom in Scotland. He then wrote to me as follows:—

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

London, Aug. 21, 1766.

"The reception of your Thesis put me in mind of my debt to you. Why did you \* \* \* \* \*<sup>2</sup> I will punish you for it, by telling you that your Latin wants correction.<sup>3</sup> In the beginning, *Spei alteræ*, not to urge that it should be *primæ*, is not grammatical: *alteræ* should be *alteri*. In the next line you seem to use *genus* absolutely, for what we call *family*, that is, for *illustrious extraction*, I doubt without authority. *Homines nullius originis* for *Nullis orti majoribus*, or, *Nulla loco nati*, is, as I am afraid, barbarous.—Ruddiman is dead.

"I have now vexed you enough and will try to please you. Your resolution

<sup>1</sup> Of his being in the chair of THE LITERARY CLUB, which at this time met once a week in the evening.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> The passage omitted alluded to a private transaction.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> This censure of my Latin relates to the Dedication, which was as follows:—

"Viro nobilissimo, ornatissimo, Joanni, Vicecomiti Mountstuart, atavis edito regibus excelsæ familiæ de Bute *spei alteræ*; labente sæculo, quum homines *nullius originis genus* æquare opibus aggrediuntur, sanguinis antiqui et illustris semper memori, natalium splendorem virtutibus argenti: ad publica populi comitia jam legato; in optimatum vero magnæ Britannicæ senatu, jure hæreditario, olim consessuro: vim insitam varia doctrina promovente, nec tamen se venditante, prædito: prisca fide animo liberrimo, et morum elegantia insigni: in Italiæ visitandæ itinere, socio suo honoratissimo, hæc jurisprudentiæ primitiis devinctissimæ amicitie et observantiæ, monumentum, D.D.C.Q. JACOBUS BOSWELL."

to obey your father I sincerely approve; but do not accustom yourself to enchain your volatility by vows; they will sometimes leave a thorn in your mind, which you will, perhaps, never be able to extract or eject. Take this warning; it is of great importance.

“The study of the law is what you very justly term it, copious and generous;<sup>1</sup> and in adding your name to its professors, you have done exactly what I always wished, when I wished you best. I hope that you will continue to pursue it vigorously and constantly. You gain, at least, what is no small advantage, security from those troublesome and wearisome discontents, which are always obtruding themselves upon a mind vacant, unemployed, and undetermined.

“You ought to think it no small inducement to diligence and perseverance, that they will please your father. We all live upon the hope of pleasing somebody, and the pleasure of pleasing ought to be greatest, and at last always will be greatest, when our endeavours are exerted in consequence of our duty.

“Life is not long, and too much of it must not pass in idle deliberation how it shall be spent: deliberation, which those who begin it by prudence, and continue it with subtilty, must, after long expense of thought, conclude by chance. To prefer one future mode of life to another, upon just reasons, requires faculties which it has not pleased our Creator to give us.

“If therefore the profession you have chosen has some unexpected inconveniences, console yourself by reflecting that no profession is without them; and that all the importunities and perplexities of business are softness and luxury, compared with the incessant cravings of vacancy, and the unsatisfactory expedients of idleness.

‘Hæc sunt quæ nostrâ potui te voce monere;  
Vade, age.’

“As to your History of Corsica, you have no materials which others have not, or may not have. You have, somehow or other, warmed your imagination. I wish there were some cure, like the lover's leap, for all heads of which some single idea has obtained an unreasonable and irregular possession. Mind your own affairs, and leave the Corsicans to theirs. I am, dear Sir,

“Your most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

“TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

“MUCH ESTEEMED AND DEAR SIR,

*Auchinleck, Nov. 6, 1766.*

“I plead not guilty to<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

“Having thus, I hope, cleared myself of the charge brought against me, I presume you will not be displeased if I escape the punishment which you have decreed for me unheard. If you have discharged the arrows of criticism against an innocent man, you must rejoice to find they have missed him, or have not been pointed so as to wound him.

<sup>1</sup> This alludes to the first sentence of the Proemium of my Thesis. “*JURISPRUDENTIÆ, studio nullum uberius, nullum generosius: in legibus enim agitandis, populorum mores, variasque fortunæ vices ex quibus leges oriuntur, contemplari simul solemus.*”—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> The passage omitted explained the transaction to which the preceding letter had alluded.  
BOSWELL.

“ To talk no longer in allegory, I am, with all deference, going to offer a few observations in defence of my Latin, which you have found fault with.

“ You think I should have used *spei primæ*, instead of *spei alteræ*. *Spes* is, indeed, often used to express something on which we have a future dependence, as in Virg. *Eclog.* i. l. 14.—

‘ ————— modo namque gemellos  
*Spem gregis, ah! silice in nudâ connixa reliquit:*’

and in *Georg.* iii. l. 473,—

‘ *Spemque gregemque simul,*

for the lambs and the sheep. Yet it is also used to express anything on which we have a present dependence, and is well applied to a man of distinguished influence,—our support, our refuge, our *presidium*, as Horace calls *Mæcenas*. So, *Æneid* xii. l. 57, Queen *Amata* addresses her son-in-law, *Turnus*:—‘ *Spes tu nunc una:*’ and he was then no future hope, for she adds,—

‘ ——— decus imperiumque Latini  
*Te penes;*’

which might have been said of my Lord Bute some years ago. Now I consider the present Earl of Bute to be ‘ *Excelsæ familiæ de Bute spes prima;*’ and my Lord Mountstuart, as his eldest son, to be ‘ *spes altera.*’ So in *Æneid* xii. l. 168, after having mentioned *Pater Æneas*, who was the present *spes*, the reigning *spes*, as my German friends would say, the *spes prima*, the poet adds,—

‘ *Et juxta Ascanius, magnæ spes altera Romæ.*’

“ You think *alteræ* ungrammatical, and you tell me it should have been *alteri*. You must recollect, that in old times *alter* was declined regularly; and when the ancient fragments preserved in the *Juris Civilis Fontes* were written, it was certainly declined in the way that I use it. This, I should think, may protect a lawyer who writes *alteræ* in a dissertation upon part of his own science. But as I could hardly venture to quote fragments of old law to so classical a man as Mr. Johnson, I have not made an accurate search into these remains, to find examples of what I am able to produce in poetical composition. We find in *Plaut. Rudens*, act iii. scene 4,—

‘ *Nam huic alteræ patria quæ sit profecto nescio.*

*Plautus* is, to be sure, an old comic writer; but in the days of *Scipio* and *Lelius*, we find *Terent. Heautontim.* act ii. scene 3,—

‘ ————— hoc ipsa in itinere alteræ  
*Dum narrat, forte audivi.*’

“ You doubt my having authority for using *genus* absolutely, for what we call *family*, that is, for *illustrious extraction*. Now I take *genus* in Latin, to have much the same signification with *birth* in English: both in their primary meaning expressing simply descent, but both made to stand *κατ’ ἕξοχην*, for noble descent. *Genus* is thus used in *Hor. lib. ii. Sat. v. l. 8*,—

‘ *Et genus et virtus, nisi cum re, vilior alga est.*’



And in lib. i. Epist<sup>t</sup> vi. l. 37,—

'Et *genus* et formam Regina pecunia donat.'

And in the celebrated contest between Ajax and Ulysses, Ovid's *Metamorph.* lib. xiii. l. 140,—

'Nam *genus* et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,  
Vix ea nostra voco.'

" 'Homines nullius originis,' for 'nullis orti majoribus,' or 'nullo loco nati,' is, 'you are afraid, barbarous.'

" *Origo* is used to signify extraction, as in Virg. *Æneid* i. 286,—

'Nascetur pulchrâ Trojanus *origine* Cæsar.'

And in *Æneid* x. l. 618,—

'Ille tamen nostrâ deducit *origine* nomen;'

and as *nullus* is used for obscure, is it not in the genius of the Latin language to write *nullius originis*, for obscure extraction?

" I have defended myself as well as I could.

" Might I venture to differ from you with regard to the utility of vows? I am sensible that it would be very dangerous to make vows rashly, and without a due consideration. But I cannot help thinking that they may often be of great advantage to one of a variable judgment and irregular inclinations. I always remember a passage in one of your letters to our Italian friend, Baretti; where, talking of the monastic life, you say you do not wonder that serious men should put themselves under the protection of a religious order, when they have found how unable they are to take care of themselves. For my own part, without affecting to be a Socrates, I am sure I have a more than ordinary struggle to maintain with *the Evil principle*; and all the methods I can devise are little enough to keep me tolerably steady in the paths of rectitude.

\* \* \* \* \*

" I am ever, with the highest veneration,

" Your affectionate humble servant,

" JAMES BOSWELL."

It appears from Johnson's diary, that he was this year at Mr. Thrale's, from before Midsummer till after Michaelmas, and that he afterwards passed a month at Oxford. He had then contracted a great intimacy with Mr. Chambers of that University, afterwards Sir Robert Chambers, one of the judges in India.

He published nothing this year in his own name; but the noble dedication\* to the King, of Gwyn's "London and Westminster Improved," was written by him; and he furnished the preface,† and several of the pieces, which compose a volume of *Miscellanies* by Mrs. Anna Williams, the blind lady who had an asylum in his house.<sup>1</sup> Of these.

<sup>1</sup> In a paper already mentioned, (see vol. i., p. 41, and near the end of the year 1763) the following account of this publication is given by a lady (Lady Knight) well acquainted with Mrs. Williams:—

As to her poems, she many years attempted to publish them: the half-crowns she had

there are his "Epitaph on Phillips;" \* "Translation of a Latin Epitaph on Sir Thomas Hanmer;" † "Friendship, an Ode;" \* and, "The Ant,"\* a paraphrase from the Proverbs, of which I have a copy in his own handwriting; and, from internal evidence, I ascribe to him, "To Miss ——— on her giving the Author a gold and silk net-work Purse of her own weaving;" † and "The Happy Life." † Most of the pieces in this volume have evidently received additions from his superior pen, particularly "Verses to Mr. Richardson, on his Sir Charles Grandison;" "The Excursion;" "Reflections on a Grave digging in Westminster Abbey." There is in this collection a poem, "On the Death of Stephen Grey, the Electrician," \* which, on reading it, appeared to me to be undoubtedly Johnson's. I asked Mrs. Williams whether it was not his. "Sir," said she, with some warmth, "I wrote that poem before I had the honour of Dr. Johnson's acquaintance." I, however, was so much impressed with my first notion, that I mentioned it to Johnson, repeating, at the same time, what Mrs. Williams had said. His answer was, "It is true, Sir, that she wrote it before she was acquainted with me; but she has not told you that I wrote it all over again, except two lines." "The Fountains," † a beautiful little fairy tale in prose, written with exquisite simplicity, is one of Johnson's productions; and I cannot withhold from Mrs. Thrale the praise of being the author of that admirable poem, "The Three Warnings."

He wrote this year a letter, not intended for publication, which has, perhaps, as strong marks of his sentiment and style, as any of his compositions. The original is in my possession. It is addressed to the late Mr. William Drummond, bookseller, in Edinburgh, a gentleman of good family, but small estate, who took arms for the house of Stuart in 1745; and during his concealment in London till the act of general pardon came out, obtained the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson, who justly esteemed him as a very worthy man. It seems, some of the members of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge had opposed the scheme of translating the Holy Scriptures into the Erse or Gaelic language, from political considerations of the disadvantage of keeping up the distinction between the Highlanders and the other inhabitants of North Britain. Dr. Johnson being informed of this, I suppose by Mr. Drummond, wrote, with a generous indignation, as follows:—

got towards the publication, she confessed to me, went for necessaries, and that the greatest pain she ever felt was from the appearance of defrauding her subscribers: 'But what can I do? the Doctor [Johnson] always puts me off with 'Well, we'll think about it,' and Goldsmith says, 'Leave it to me.' However, two of her friends, under her directions, made a new subscription at a crown, the whole price of the work, and in a very little time raised sixty pounds. Mrs. Carter was applied to by Mrs. Williams's desire, and she with the utmost activity and kindness, procured a long list of names. At length the work was published, in which is a fine written, but gloomy tale of Dr. Johnson. The money Mrs. Williams had various uses for, and a part of it was funded."—BOSWELL.

By this publication Mrs. Williams got £150.—MALONE.

## " TO MR. WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

" SIR,

*Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, Aug. 13, 1766.*

" I did not expect to hear that it could be, in an assembly convened for the propagation of Christian knowledge, a question whether any nation uninstructed in religion should receive instruction; or whether that instruction should be imparted to them by a translation of the holy books into their own language. If obedience to the will of GOD be necessary to happiness, and knowledge of his will be necessary to obedience, I know not how he that withholds this knowledge, or delays it, can be said to love his neighbour as himself. He that voluntarily continues ignorance, is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces; as to him that should extinguish the tapers of a lighthouse, might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwrecks. Christianity is the highest perfection of humanity; and as no man is good but as he wishes the good of others, no man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes not to others the largest measures of the greatest good. To omit for a year, or for a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity, in compliance with any purposes that terminate on this side of the grave, is a crime of which I know not that the world has yet had an example, except in the practice of the planters of America, a race of mortals whom, I suppose, no other man wishes to resemble.

" The Papists have, indeed, denied to the laity the use of the Bible; but this prohibition, in few places now very rigorously enforced, is defended by arguments which have for their foundation the care of souls. To obscure, upon motives merely political, the light of revelation, is a practice reserved for the reformed; and, surely, the blackest midnight of Popery is meridian sunshine to such a reformation. I am not very willing that any language should be totally extinguished. The similitude and derivation of languages afford the most indubitable proof of the traduction of nations, and the genealogy of mankind. They add often physical certainty to historical evidence; and often supply the only evidence of ancient migrations, and of the revolutions of ages which left no written monuments behind them.

" Every man's opinions, at least his desires, are a little influenced by his favourite studies. My zeal for languages may seem, perhaps, rather over-heated, even to those by whom I desire to be well esteemed. To those who have nothing in their thoughts but trade or policy, present power, or present money, I should not think it necessary to defend my opinions; but with men of letters I would not unwillingly compound, by wishing the continuance of every language, however narrow in its extent, or however incommodious for common purposes, till it is repositied in some version of a known book, that it may be always hereafter examined and compared with other languages, and then permitting its disuse. For this purpose the translation of the Bible is most to be desired. It is not certain that the same method will not preserve the Highland language, for the purposes of learning, and abolish it from daily use. When the Highlanders read the Bible, they will naturally wish to have its obscurities cleared and to know the history, collateral or appendant. Knowledge always desires increase; it is like fire, which must first be kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself. When

they once desire to learn, they will naturally have recourse to the nearest language by which that desire can be gratified; and one will tell another that if he would attain knowledge, he must learn English.

"This speculation may, perhaps, be thought more subtle than the grossness of real life will easily admit. Let it, however, be remembered, that the efficacy of ignorance has long been tried, and has not produced the consequence expected. Let knowledge, therefore, take its turn; and let the patrons of privation stand awhile aside, and admit the operation of positive principles.

"You will be pleased, Sir, to assure the worthy man who is employed in the new translation,<sup>1</sup> that he has my wishes for his success; and if here or at Oxford I can be of any use, that I shall think it more than honour to promote his undertaking.

"I am sorry that I delayed so long to write.

"I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

The opponents of this pious scheme being made ashamed of their conduct, the benevolent undertaking was allowed to go on.

The following letters, though not written till the year after, being chiefly upon the same subject, are here inserted:—

"TO MR. WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

"DEAR SIR,

*Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, April 21, 1767*

"That my letter should have had such effects as you mention, gives me great pleasure. I hope you do not flatter me by imputing to me more good than I have really done. Those whom my arguments have persuaded to change their opinion, show such modesty and candour as deserve great praise.

"I hope the worthy translator goes diligently forward. He has a higher reward in prospect than any honours which this world can bestow. I wish I could be useful to him.

"The publication of my letter, if it could be of use in a cause to which all other causes are nothing, I should not prohibit. But first, I would have you to consider whether the publication will really do any good; next, whether by printing and distributing a very small number, you may not attain all that you propose; and, what perhaps I should have said first, whether the letter, which I do not now perfectly remember, be fit to be printed.

"If you can consult Dr. Robertson, to whom I am a little known, I shall be satisfied about the propriety of whatever he shall direct. If he thinks that it should be printed, I entreat him to revise it; there may, perhaps, be some

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Mr. John Campbell, Minister of the parish of Kippen, near Stirling, who has lately favoured me with a long, intelligent, and very obliging letter upon this work, makes the following remark: "Dr. Johnson has alluded to the worthy man employed in the translation of the New Testament. Might not this have afforded you an opportunity of paying a proper tribute of respect to the memory of the Rev. Mr. James Stuart, late Minister of Killin, distinguished by his eminent piety, learning, and taste? The amiable simplicity of his life, his warm benevolence, his indefatigable and successful exertions for civilising and improving the parish of which he was minister for upwards of fifty years, entitle him to the gratitude of his country, and the veneration of all good men. It certainly would be a pity if such a character should be permitted to sink into oblivion."—BOSWELL.

negligent lines written, and whatever is amiss, he knows very well how to rectify.<sup>1</sup>

"Be pleased to let me know, from time to time, how this excellent design goes forward.

"Make my compliments to young Mr. Drummond, whom I hope you will live to see such as you desire him.

"I have not lately seen Mr. Elphinston, but believe him to be prosperous. I shall be glad to hear the same of you, for I am, Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"SIR,

*London, Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, Oct. 24, 1767.*

"I returned this week from the country, after an absence of near six months, and found your letter with many others, which I should have answered sooner, if I had sooner seen them.

"Dr. Robertson's opinion was surely right. Men should not be told of the faults which they have mended. I am glad the old language is taught, and honour the translator as a man whom God has distinguished by the high office of propagating his word.

"I must take the liberty of engaging you in an office of charity. Mrs. Heely, the wife of Mr. Heely, who had lately some office in your theatre, is my near relation, and now in great distress. They wrote me word of their situation some time ago, to which I returned them an answer which raised hopes of more than it is proper for me to give them. Their representation of their affairs I have discovered to be such as cannot be trusted; and at this distance, though their case requires haste, I know not how to act. She, or her daughters, may be heard of at Canongate Head. I must beg, Sir, that you will inquire after them, and let me know what is to be done. I am willing to go to ten pounds, and will transmit you such a sum, if, upon examination, you find it likely to be of use. If they are in immediate want, advance them what you think proper. What I could do I would do for the woman, having no great reason to pay much regard to Heely himself.<sup>2</sup>

"I believe you may receive some intelligence from Mrs. Baker, of the theatre, whose letter I received at the same time with yours; and to whom, if you see her, you will make my excuse for the seeming neglect of answering her.

"Whatever you advance within ten pounds shall be immediately returned to you, or paid as you shall order. I trust wholly to your judgment.

"I am, Sir, &c.,

SAM. JOHNSON."

Mr. Cuthbert Shaw,<sup>3</sup> alike distinguished by his genius, misfortunes, and misconduct, published this year a poem, called "The Race, by

- This paragraph shows Johnson's real estimation of the character and abilities of the celebrated Scottish historian, however lightly, in a moment of caprice, he may have spoken of his works.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> This is the person concerning whom Sir John Hawkins has thrown out very unwarrantable reflections both against Dr. Johnson and Mr. Francis Barber.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> See an account of him in "The European Magazine," Jan. 1786.—BOSWELL.

Mercurius Spur, Esq.," in which he whimsically made the living poets of England contend for pre-eminence of fame by running:—

"Prove by their heels the prowess of the head."

In this poem there was the following portrait of Johnson:—

"Here Johnson comes,—unblest with outward grace,  
His rigid morals stamp'd upon his face,  
While strong conceptions struggle in his brain:  
(For even wit is brought to bed with pain:)  
To view him, porters with their loads would rest,  
And babes cling frighted to the nurse's breast.  
With looks convulsed, he roars in pompous strain,  
And, like an angry lion, shakes his mane.  
The nine, with terror struck, who ne'er had seen  
Aught human with so terrible a mien,  
Debating whether they should stay or run,  
Virtue steps forth, and claims him for her son.  
With gentle speech she warns him now to yield,  
Nor stain his glories in the doubtful field;  
But wrapt in conscious worth, content sit down,  
Since Fame, resolved his various pleas to crown,  
Though forced his present claim to disavow,  
Had long reserved a chaplet for his brow.  
He bows, obeys; for Time shall first expire,  
Ere Johnson stay, when Virtue bids retire."

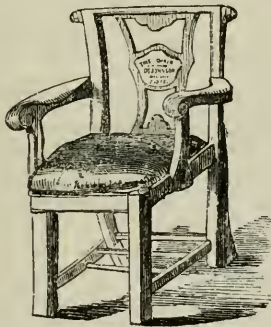
The Honourable Thomas Hervey<sup>1</sup> and his lady, having unhappily disagreed, and being about to separate, Johnson interfered as their friend, and wrote him a letter of expostulation, which I have not been able to find; but the substance of it is ascertained by a letter to Johnson in answer to it, which Mr. Hervey printed. The occasion of this correspondence between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Hervey, was thus related to me by Mr. Beauclerk.

"Tom Hervey had a great liking for Johnson, and in his will had left him a legacy of fifty pounds. One day he said to me, 'Johnson may want this money now, more than afterwards. I have a mind to give it him directly. Will you be so good as to carry a fifty pound note from me to him?' This I positively refused to do, as he might, perhaps, have knocked me down for insulting him, and have afterwards put the note in his pocket. But I said if Hervey would write him a letter, and enclose a fifty pound note, I should take care to deliver it. He accordingly did write him a letter, mentioning that he was only paying a legacy a little sooner. To his letter he added, '*P.S. I am going to part with*

<sup>1</sup> The Honourable Thomas Hervey, whose letter to Sir Thomas Hanmer, in 1742, was much read at that time. He was the second son of John, the first Earl of Bristol, and one of the brothers of Johnson's early friend, Henry Hervey. He married in 1744, Anne, daughter of Francis Coughlan, Esq., and died Jan. 20, 1775.—MALONE.

*my wife.*' Johnson then wrote to him, saying nothing of the note, but remonstrating with him against parting with his wife."

When I mentioned to Johnson this story, in as delicate terms as I could, he told me that the fifty pound note was given to him by Mr. Hervey in consideration of his having written for him a pamphlet against Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, who, Mr. Hervey imagined, was the author of an attack upon him ; but that it was afterwards discovered to be the work of a garreteer, who wrote "The Fool;" the pamphlet therefore against Sir Charles was not printed.



DR. JOHNSON'S CHAIR.



GEORGE III.

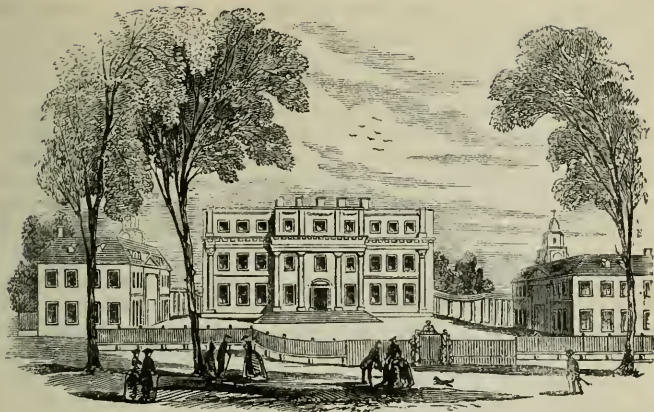
## CHAPTER II.—1767—1768.

JOHNSON INTRODUCED TO GEORGE III. AT BUCKINGHAM HOUSE—VISITS LICHFIELD—DEATH OF CATHERINE CHAMBERS—WRITES PROLOGUE TO GOLDSMITH'S "GOOD-NATURED MAN"—BOSWELL'S ACCOUNT OF CORSICA PUBLISHED—COMPARISON OF THE WORKS OF FIELDING AND RICHARDSON—THE GREAT DOUGLAS CAUSE—ST. KILDA—JOHNSON'S VIEWS OF CONJUGAL INFIDELITY—CHASTITY AND THE CHOICE OF A WIFE—BARETTI'S ITALY—JOHNSON VISITS OXFORD—RETURNS TO LONDON—HIS CONTEMPT FOR POPULAR LIBERTY—DR. KENRICK'S PAMPHLET—JOHNSON PLACES FRANCIS BARBER AT SCHOOL—CONVERSATIONAL STRICTURES ON THOMSON THE POET AND DR. MOUNSEY—ORIGIN OF THE "BEAR" EPITHET.

IN February, 1767, there happened one of the most remarkable incidents of Johnson's life, which gratified his monarchical enthusiasm, and which he loved to relate with all its circumstances, when requested by his friends. This was his being honoured by a private conversation with his Majesty, in the library at the Queen's house. He had frequently visited those splendid rooms, and noble collection of books,<sup>1</sup> which he used to say was more numerous and curious than he supposed any person could have made in the time which the king had employed. Mr. Barnard, the librarian, took care that he should have every accom-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson had the honour of contributing his assistance towards the formation of this library; for I have read a long letter from him to Mr. Barnard, giving the most masterly instruction on the subject. I wished much to have gratified my readers with the perusal of this letter, and have reason to think that his Majesty would have been graciously pleased to permit its publication; but Mr. Barnard, to whom I applied, declined it "on his own account."  
—BOSWELL.





OLD BUCKINGHAM HOUSE.

modation that could contribute to his ease and convenience, while indulging his literary taste in that place—so that he had here a very agreeable resource at leisure hours.

His Majesty having been informed of his occasional visits, was pleased to signify a desire that he should be told when Dr. Johnson came next to the library. Accordingly, the next time that Johnson did come, as soon as he was fairly engaged with a book, on which, while he sat by the fire, he seemed quite intent, Mr. Barnard stole round to the apartment where the king was, and, in obedience to his Majesty's commands, mentioned that Dr. Johnson was then in the library. His Majesty said he was at leisure, and would go to him: upon which Mr. Barnard took one of the candles that stood on the king's table, and lighted his Majesty through a suite of rooms, till they came to a private door into the library, of which his Majesty had the key. Being entered, Mr. Barnard stepped forward hastily to Dr. Johnson, who was still in a profound study, and whispered him, "Sir, here is the king." Johnson started up, and stood still. His Majesty approached him, and at once was courteously easy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The particulars of this conversation I have been at great pains to collect with the utmost authenticity, from Dr. Johnson's own detail to myself; from Mr. Langton, who was present when he gave an account of it to Dr. Joseph Warton, and several other friends, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's; from Mr. Barnard; from the copy of a letter written by the late Mr. Strahan, the printer, to Bishop Warburton; and from a minute, the original of which is among the papers of the late Sir James Caldwell, and a copy of which was most obligingly obtained for me from his son Sir John Caldwell, by Sir Francis Lumm. To all these gentlemen I beg leave to make my grateful acknowledgments, and particularly to Sir Francis Lumm, who was pleased to take a great deal of trouble, and even had the minute laid before the king by Lord Caermarthen now Duke of Leeds, then one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state, who announced to Sir Francis the Royal pleasure concerning it by a letter, in these

His Majesty began by observing, that he understood he came sometimes to the library: and then mentioned his having heard that the Doctor had been lately at Oxford, asked him if he was not fond of going thither. To which Johnson answered, that he was indeed fond of going to Oxford sometimes, but was likewise glad to come back again. The king then asked him what they were doing at Oxford. Johnson answered, he could not much commend their diligence, but that in some respects they were mended, for they had put their press under better regulations, and were at that time printing Polybius. He was then asked whether there were better libraries at Oxford or Cambridge. He answered, he believed the Bodleian was larger than any they had at Cambridge; at the same time adding, "I hope, whether we have more books or not than they have at Cambridge, we shall make as good use of them as they do." Being asked whether All-Souls or Christ-Church library was the largest, he answered, "All-Souls library is the largest we have, except the Bodleian." "Ay," said the king, "that is the public library."

His Majesty inquired if he was then writing anything. He answered, he was not, for he had pretty well told the world what he knew, and must now read to acquire more knowledge. The king, as it should seem with a view to urge him to rely on his own stores as an original writer, and to continue his labours, then said, "I do not think you borrow much from any body." Johnson said, he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so too," said the king, "if you had not written so well."—Johnson observed to me, upon this, that "no man could have paid a handsomer compliment; and it was fit for a king to pay. It was decisive." When asked by another friend, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, whether he made any reply to this high compliment, he answered, "No, Sir. When the king had said it, it was to be so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my sovereign." Perhaps no man who had spent his whole life in courts could have shown a more nice and dignified sense of true politeness than Johnson did in this instance.

His Majesty having observed to him that he supposed he must have read a great deal, Johnson answered, that he thought more than he read; that he had read a great deal in the early part of his life, but having fallen into ill-health, he had not been able to read much, compared with others; for instance, he said he had not read much, compared with Dr. Warburton. Upon which the king said, that he heard Dr. Warburton was a man of such general knowledge, that you

words: "I have the king's commands to assure you, Sir, how sensible his Majesty is of your attention in communicating the minute of the conversation previous to its publication. As there appears no objection to your complying with Mr. Boswell's wishes on the subject, you are at full liberty to deliver it to that gentleman, to make such use of in his 'Life of Dr. Johnson,' as he may think proper."—BOSWELL.

could scarce talk with him on any subject on which he was not qualified to speak; and that his learning resembled Garrick's acting, in its universality.<sup>1</sup> His Majesty then talked of the controversy between Warburton and Lowth, which he seems to have read, and asked Johnson what he thought of it. Johnson answered, "Warburton has most general, most scholastic learning: Lowth is the more correct scholar. I do not know which of them calls names best." The king was pleased to say he was of the same opinion: adding, "You do not think, then, Dr. Johnson, that there was much argument in the case." Johnson said, he did not think there was. "Why, truly," said the king, "when once it comes to calling names, argument is pretty well at an end."

His Majesty then asked him what he thought of Lord Lyttelton's history, which was then just published. Johnson said, he thought his style pretty good, but that he had blamed Henry the Second rather too much. "Why," said the king, "they seldom do these things by halves." "No, Sir," answered Johnson, "not to kings." But fearing to be misunderstood, he proceeded to explain himself; and immediately subjoined, "That for those who spoke worse of kings than they deserved, he could find no excuse; but that he could more easily conceive how some might speak better of them than they deserved, without any ill intention; for, as kings had much in their power to give, those who were favoured by them would frequently, from gratitude, exaggerate their praises; and as this proceeded from a good motive, it was certainly excusable, as far as error could be excusable."

The king then asked him what he thought of Dr. Hill. Johnson answered, that he was an ingenious man, but had no veracity; and immediately mentioned, as an instance of it, an assertion of that writer, that he had seen objects magnified to a much greater degree by using three or four microscopes at a time than by using one. "Now," added Johnson, "every one acquainted with microscopes knows, that the more of them he looks through, the less the object will appear." "Why," replied the king, "this is not telling an untruth, but telling it clumsily; for, if that be the case, every one who can look through a microscope will be able to detect him."

"I now," said Johnson to his friends, when relating what had passed, "began to consider that I was depreciating this man in the estimation of his sovereign, and thought it was time for me to say something that might be more favourable." He added, therefore, that Dr. Hill was, notwithstanding, a very curious observer; and if he would have been contented to tell the world no more than he knew, he might have been

<sup>1</sup> The Reverend Mr. Strahan clearly recollects having been told by Johnson, that the king observed that Pope made Warburton a bishop. "True, Sir," said Johnson, "but Warburton did more for Pope; he made him a Christian:" alluding, no doubt, to his ingenious comments on "The Essay of Man."—BOSWELL.

a very considerable man, and needed not to have recourse to such mean expedients to raise his reputation.

The king then talked of literary journals, mentioned particularly the *Journal des savans*, and asked Johnson if it was well done. Johnson said, it was formerly very well done, and gave some account of the persons who began it, and carried it on for some years; enlarging, at the same time, on the nature and use of such works. The king asked him if it was well done now. Johnson answered, he had no reason to think that it was. The king then asked him if there were any other literary journals published in this kingdom, except the Monthly and Critical Reviews; and on being answered there was no other, his Majesty asked which of them was the best; Johnson answered, that the Monthly Review was done with most care, the Critical upon the best principles; adding, that the authors of the Monthly Review were enemies to the Church. This the king said he was sorry to hear.

The conversation next turned on the Philosophical Transactions, when Johnson observed that they had now a better method of arranging their materials than formerly. "Ay," said the king, "they are obliged to Dr. Johnson for that:" for his Majesty had heard and remembered the circumstance, which Johnson himself had forgot.

His Majesty expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it. Johnson signified his readiness to comply with his Majesty's wishes.

During the whole of this interview, Johnson talked to his Majesty with profound respect, but still in his firm manly manner, with a sonorous voice, and never in that subdued tone which is commonly used at the levee and in the drawing-room. After the king withdrew, Johnson showed himself highly pleased with his Majesty's conversation, and gracious behaviour. He said to Mr. Barnard, "Sir, they may talk of the king as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And he afterwards observed to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman as we may suppose Louis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second."

At Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where a circle of Johnson's friends was collected round him to hear his account of this memorable conversation, Dr. Joseph Warton, in his frank and lively manner, was very active in pressing him to mention the particulars. "Come now, Sir, this is an interesting matter; do favour us with it." Johnson, with great good humour, complied.

He told them, "I found his Majesty wished I should talk, and I made it my business to talk. I find it does a man good to be talked to by his sovereign. In the first place, a man cannot be in a passion—." Here some question interrupted him, which is to be regretted, as he certainly would have pointed out and illustrated many circumstances of advantage, from being in a situation where the powers of the mind

are at once excited to vigorous exertion and tempered by reverential awe.

During all the time in which Dr. Johnson was employed in relating to the circle at Sir Joshua Reynolds's the particulars of what passed between the king and him, Dr. Goldsmith remained unmoved upon a sofa at some distance, affecting not to join in the least in the eager curiosity of the company. He assigned as a reason for his gloom and seeming inattention, that he apprehended Johnson had relinquished his purpose of furnishing him with a Prologue to his play, with the hopes of which he had been flattered; but it was strongly suspected that he was fretting with chagrin and envy at the singular honour Dr. Johnson had lately enjoyed. At length, the frankness and simplicity of his natural character prevailed. He sprung from the sofa, advanced to Johnson, and in a kind of flutter, from imagining himself in the situation which he had just been hearing described, exclaimed, "Well, you acquitted yourself in this conversation better than I should have done; for I should have bowed and stammered through the whole of it."

I received no letter from Johnson this year; nor have I discovered any of the correspondence<sup>1</sup> he had, except the two letters to Mr. Drummond, which have been inserted, for the sake of connection with that to the same gentlemen in 1766. His diary affords no light as to his employment at this time. He passed three months at Lichfield;<sup>2</sup> and I cannot omit an affecting and solemn scene there, as related by himself:—

"Sunday, Oct. 18, 1767. Yesterday, Oct. 17, at about ten in the morning, I took my leave for ever of my dear old friend, Catherine Chambers, who came to live with my mother about 1724, and has been but little parted from us since. She buried my father, my brother, and my mother. She is now fifty-eight years old.

"I desired all to withdraw, then told her that we were to part for ever; that, as Christians, we should part with prayer; and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me; and held up her poor hands, as she lay in bed, with great fervour, while I prayed, kneeling by her, nearly in the following words:

"Almighty and most merciful Father, whose loving kindness is over all thy works, behold, visit, and relieve this thy servant, who is grieved with sickness. Grant that the sense of her weakness may add strength to her faith, and seriousness to her repentance. And grant that by the help of thy Holy Spirit, after the pains and labours of this short life, we may all obtain everlasting happiness, though JESUS CHRIST our Lord, for whose sake hear our prayers. Amen. Our Father, &c.'

<sup>1</sup> It is proper here to mention, that when I speak of his correspondence, I consider it independent of the voluminous collection of letters which, in the course of many years, he wrote to Mrs. Thrale, which forms a separate part of his works; and as a proof of the high estimation set on anything which came from his pen, was sold by that lady for the sum of five hundred pounds.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> In his letter to Mr. Drummond, dated Oct. 24, 1767, he mentions that he had arrived in London, after an absence of nearly *six months* in the country. Probably part of that time was spent at Oxford.—MALONE.

"I then kissed her. She told me that to part was the greatest pain that she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes, and great emotion of tenderness, the same hopes. We kissed, and parted. I humbly hope to meet again, and to part no more."<sup>1</sup>

By those who have been taught to look upon Johnson as a man of a harsh and stern character, let this tender and affectionate scene be candidly read; and let them then judge whether more warmth of heart and grateful kindness, is often found in human nature.

We have the following notice in his devotional record:—

"August 2, 1767. I have been disturbed and unsettled for a long time, and have been without resolution to apply to study or to business, being hindered by sudden snatches."<sup>2</sup>

He, however, furnished Mr. Adams with a dedication \* to the king of that ingenious gentleman's "Treatise on the Globes," conceived and expressed in such a manner as could not fail to be very grateful to a monarch, distinguished for his love of the sciences.

This year was published a ridicule of his style, under the title of "Lexiphanes." Sir John Hawkins ascribes it to Dr. Kenrick; but its author was one Campbell, a Scotch purser in the navy. The ridicule consisted in applying Johnson's "words of large meaning," to insignificant matters, as if one should put the armour of Goliath upon a dwarf. The contrast might be laughable; but the dignity of the armour must remain the same in all considerate minds. This malicious drollery, therefore, it may easily be supposed, could do no harm to its illustrious object.

"TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT MR. ROTHWELL'S, PERFUMER,  
IN NEW BOND-STREET, LONDON.

"DEAR SIR,

*Isichfield, Oct. 10, 1767.*

"That you have been all summer in London is one more reason for which I regret my long stay in the country. I hope that you will not leave the town before my return. We have here only the chance of vacancies in the passing carriages, and I have bespoken one that may, if it happens, bring me to town on the 14th of this month; but this is not certain.

"It will be a favour if you communicate this to Mrs. Williams: I long to see all my friends.

I am, dear Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

It appears from his notes of the state of his mind,<sup>3</sup> that he suffered great perturbation and distraction in 1768. Nothing of his writings was given to the public this year, except the Prologue\* to his friend Goldsmith's comedy of "The Good-natured Man." The first lines of

<sup>1</sup> Prayers and Meditations. pp. 77, 78.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 81.

this Prologue are strongly characteristic of the dismal gloom of his mind ; which, in his case, as in the case of all who are distressed with the same malady of imagination, transfers to others its own feelings. Who could suppose it was to introduce a comedy, when Mr. Bensley solemnly began :—

“ Press'd with the load of life, the weary mind,  
Surveys the general toil of human kind.”

But this dark ground might make Goldsmith's humour shine the more.<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of this year, having published my “ Account of Corsica, with the Journal of a Tour to that Island,” I returned to London, very desirous to see Dr. Johnson, and hear him upon the subject. I found he was at Oxford, with his friend Mr. Chambers, who was now Viennian Professor, and lived in New Inn Hall. Having had no letter from him since that in which he criticised the Latinity of my Thesis, and having been told by somebody that he was offended at my having put into my book an extract of his letter to me at Paris, I was impatient to be with him, and therefore followed him to Oxford, where I was entertained by Mr. Chambers, with a civility which I shall ever gratefully remember. I found that Dr. Johnson had sent a letter to me to Scotland, and that I had nothing to complain of but his being more indifferent to my anxiety than I wished him to be. Instead of giving, with the circumstances of time and place, such fragments of his conversation as I preserved during this visit to Oxford, I shall throw them together in continuation.

I asked him whether, as a moralist, he did not think that the practice of the law, in some degree, hurt the nice feeling of honesty. JOHNSON : “ Why no, Sir, if you act properly. You are not to deceive your clients with false representations of your opinion ; you are not to tell lies to a judge.” BOSWELL : “ But what do you think of supporting a cause which you know to be bad ?” JOHNSON : “ Sir, you do not know it to be good or bad till the judge determines it. I have said that you are to state facts fairly ; so that your thinking, or what you call knowing, a cause to be bad, must be from reasoning, must be from your supposing your arguments to be weak and inconclusive. But, Sir,

<sup>1</sup> In this Prologue, as Mr. John Taylor informs me, after the fourth line—“ And social sorrow loses half its pain,” the following couplet was inserted :—

“ Amidst the toils of this returning year,  
When senators and nobles learn to fear ;  
Our little bard without complaint may share  
The bustling season's epidemic care :”

So the Prologue appeared in “ The Public Advertiser,” the theatrical gazette of that day, soon after the first representation of this comedy in 1768. Goldsmith probably thought that the lines printed in italic characters, which, however, seem necessary, or at least improve the sense, might give offence, and therefore prevailed on Johnson to omit them. The epithet *little*, which perhaps the author thought might diminish his dignity, was also changed to *anxious*.—MALONE.

that is not enough. An argument which does not convince yourself may convince the judge to whom you urge it; and if it does convince him, why, then, sir, you are wrong, and he is right. It is his business to judge; and you are not to be confident in your own opinion that a cause is bad, but to say all you can for your client, and then hear the judge's opinion." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, does not affecting a warmth when you have no warmth, and appearing to be clearly of one opinion when you are in reality of another opinion, does not such dissimulation impair one's honesty? Is there not some danger that a lawyer may put on the same mask in common life in the intercourse with his friends?" JOHNSON: "Why no, Sir. Everybody knows you are paid for affecting warmth for your client; and it is, therefore, properly no dissimulation: the moment you come from the bar you resume your usual behaviour. Sir, a man will no more carry the artifice of the bar into the common intercourse of society, than a man who is paid for tumbling upon his hands will continue to tumble upon his hands when he should walk on his feet."<sup>1</sup>

Talking of some of the modern plays, he said, "False Delicacy" was totally void of character. He praised Goldsmith's "Good-natured Man;" said it was the best comedy that had appeared since "The Provoked Husband," and that there had not been of late any such character exhibited on the stage as that of Croaker. I observed it was the *Suspensus* of his "Rambler." He said, Goldsmith had owned he had borrowed it from thence. "Sir," continued he, "there is all the difference in the world between characters of nature and characters of manners; and *there* is the difference between the characters of Fielding and those of Richardson. Characters of manners are very entertaining; but they are to be understood by a more superficial observer than characters of nature, where a man must dive into the recesses of the human heart."



FIELDING.

It always appeared to me that he estimated the compositions of Richardson too highly, and that he had an unreasonable prejudice against Fielding. In comparing those two writers he used this expression: "that there was as great a difference between them as between a man who knew how a watch was made and a man who could tell the hour by looking on the dial-plate." This was a short and figurative state of his distinction

<sup>1</sup> See "The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," 4th edit. p. 14, where Johnson has supported the same argument.—J. BOSWELL, JUN.



between drawing characters of nature and characters only of manners. But I cannot help being of opinion, that the neat watches of Fielding are as well constructed as the large clocks of Richardson, and that his dial-plates are brighter. Fielding's characters, though they do not expand themselves so widely in dissertation, are as just pictures of human nature, and I will venture to say, have more striking features, and nicer touches of the pencil; and though Johnson used to quote with approbation a saying of Richardson's, "that the virtues of Fielding's heroes were the vices of a truly good man," I will venture to add, that the moral tendency of Fielding's writings, though it does not encourage a strained and rarely possible virtue, is ever favourable to honour and honesty, and cherishes the benevolent and generous affections. He who is as good as Fielding would make him, is an amiable member of society, and may be led on by more regulated instructors, to a higher state of ethical perfection.

Johnson proceeded: "Even Sir Francis Wronghead<sup>1</sup> is a character of manners, though drawn with great humour." He then repeated, very happily, all Sir Francis's credulous account to Manly of his being with "the great man," and securing a place. I asked him, if "The Suspicious Husband" did not furnish a well-drawn character, that of Ranger. JOHNSON: "No, Sir; Ranger is just a rake, a mere rake, and a lively young fellow, but no *character*."

The great Douglas cause was at this time a very general subject of discussion. I found he had not studied it with much attention, but had only heard parts of it occasionally. He, however, talked of it, and said, "I am of opinion that positive proof of fraud should not be required of the plaintiff, but that the judges should decide according as probability shall appear to preponderate, granting to the defendant the presumption of filiation to be strong in his favour. And I think, too, that a good deal of weight should be allowed to the dying declarations, because they were spontaneous. There is a great difference between what is said without our being urged to it, and what is said from a kind of compulsion. If I praise a man's book without being asked my opinion of it, that is honest praise, to which one may trust. But if an author asks me if I like his book, and I give him something like praise, it must not be taken as my real opinion."

"I have not been troubled for a long time with authors desiring my opinion of their works. I used once to be sadly plagued with a man who wrote verses, but who literally had no other notion of a verse, but that it consisted of ten syllables. *Lay your knife and your fork across your plate*, was to him a verse :

Lay yōur knife ānd your fōrk acrōss your plāte.

<sup>1</sup> In "The Provoked Husband," which was begun by Sir John Vanbrugh, and finished by Colley Cibber.—WRIGHT.

As he wrote a great number of verses, he sometimes by chance made good ones, though he did not know it."

He renewed his promise of coming to Scotland and going with me to the Hebrides, but said he would now content himself with seeing one or two of the most curious of them. He said, "Macaulay, who writes the account of St. Kilda, set out with a prejudice against prejudice, and wanted to be a smart modern thinker; and yet affirms for a truth, that when a ship arrives there all the inhabitants are seized with a cold."

Dr. John Campbell, the celebrated writer, took a great deal of pains to ascertain this fact, and attempted to account for it on physical principles, from the effect of effluvia from human bodies. Johnson, at another time, praised Macaulay, for his "*magnanimity*," in asserting this wonderful story, because it was well attested. A lady of Norfolk, by a letter to my friend Dr. Burney, has favoured me with the following solution:

"Now for the explication of this seeming mystery, which is so very obvious as, for that reason, to have escaped the penetration of Dr. Johnson and his friend, as well as that of the author. Reading the book with my ingenious friend, the late Reverend Mr. Christian, of Docking—after ruminating a little, 'The cause,' says he, 'is a natural one. The situation of St. Kilda renders a north-east wind indispensably necessary before a stranger can land. The wind, not the stranger, occasions an epidemic cold.' If I am not mistaken, Mr. Macaulay is dead; if living, this solution might please him, as I hope it will Mr. Boswell, in return for the many agreeable hours his works have afforded us."

Johnson expatiated on the advantages of Oxford for learning. "There is here, Sir," said he, "such a progressive emulation. The students are anxious to appear well to their tutors; the tutors are anxious to have their pupils appear well in the college; the colleges are anxious to have their students appear well in the university; and there are excellent rules of discipline in every college. That the rules are sometimes ill observed, may be true; but is nothing against the system. The members of an University may, for a season, be unmindful of their duty. I am arguing for the excellency of the institution."

Of Guthrie, he said, "Sir, he is a man of parts. He has no great regular fund of knowledge; but by reading so long, and writing so long, he no doubt has picked up a good deal."

He said he had lately been a long while at Lichfield, but had grown very weary before he left it. BOSWELL: "I wonder at that, Sir; it is your native place." JOHNSON: "Why so is Scotland *your* native place."

His prejudice against Scotland appeared remarkably strong at this time.<sup>1</sup> When I talked of our advancement in literature, "Sir," said

<sup>1</sup> Johnson's invectives against Scotland, in common conversation, were more in pleasantry and sport than real and malignant; for no man was more visited by natives of that country, nor were there any for whom he had a greater esteem. It was to Dr. Grainger, a Scottish physician, that I owed my first acquaintance with Johnson in 1756.—PERCY.

he, "you have learnt a little from us, and you think yourselves very great men. Hume would never have written History, had not Voltaire written it before him. He is an echo of Voltaire." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, we have Lord Kames." JOHNSON: "You *have* Lord Kames. Keep him; ha, ha, ha! We don't envy you him. Do you ever see Dr. Robertson?" BOSWELL: "Yes, Sir," JOHNSON: "Does the dog talk of me?" BOSWELL: "Indeed, Sir, he does, and loves you." Thinking that I now had him in a corner, and being solicitous for the literary fame of my country, I pressed him for his opinion on the merit of Dr. Robertson's History of Scotland. But to my surprise, he escaped. "Sir, I love Robertson, and I won't talk of his book."

It is but justice both to him and Dr. Robertson to add, that though he indulged himself in this sally of wit, he had too good taste not to be fully sensible of the merits of that admirable work.

An essay, written by Mr. Deane, a Divine of the Church of England, maintaining the future life of brutes, by an explication of certain parts of the Scriptures, was mentioned, and the doctrine insisted on by a gentleman who seemed fond of curious speculation—Johnson, who did not like to hear anything concerning a future state which was not authorised by the regular canons of orthodoxy, discouraged this talk; and being offended at its continuation, he watched an opportunity to give the gentleman a blow of reprehension. So, when the poor speculatist, with a serious, metaphysical, pensive face, addressed him, "But really, Sir, when we see a very sensible dog, we don't know what to think of him," Johnson, rolling with joy at the thought which beamed in his eye, turned quickly round, and replied, "True, Sir: and when we see a very foolish *fellow*, we don't know what to think of *him*." He then rose up, strided to the fire, and stood for some time laughing and exulting.

I told him that I had several times, when in Italy, seen the experiment of placing a scorpion within a circle of burning coals; that it ran round and round in extreme pain, and finding no way to escape, retired to the centre, and like a true stoic philosopher, darted its sting into its head, and thus at once freed itself from its woes. "*This must end 'em.*" I said this was a curious fact, as it showed deliberate suicide in a reptile. Johnson would not admit the fact. He said, Maupertuis<sup>1</sup> was of opinion that it does not kill itself, but dies of the heat; that it gets to the centre of the circle, as the coolest place; that its turning

<sup>1</sup> I should think it impossible not to wonder at the variety of Johnson's reading however desultory it might have been. Who could have imagined that the High Church of Englandman would be so prompt in quoting *Maupertuis*, who, I am sorry to think, stands in the list of those unfortunate mistaken men, who call themselves *esprits forts*. I have, however, a high respect for that philosopher whom the great Frederick of Prussia loved and honoured, and addressed pathetically in one of his poems,—

"Maupertuis! cher Maupertuis!  
Que notre vie est peu de chose."

There was in Maupertuis a vigour and yet a tenderness of sentiment, united with strong

its tail in upon its head is merely a convulsion, and that it does not sting itself. He said he would be satisfied if the great anatomist Morgagni, after dissecting a scorpion on which the experiment had been tried, should certify that its sting had penetrated into its head.

He seemed pleased to talk of natural philosophy. "That wood-cocks," said he, "fly over the northern countries, is proved, because they have been observed at sea. Swallows certainly sleep all the winter. A number of them conglobulate together, by flying round and round, and then all in a heap throw themselves under water, and lie in the bed of a river." He told us, one of his first essays was a Latin poem upon the glow-worm; I am sorry I did not ask where it was to be found.

Talking of the Russians and the Chinese, he advised me to read "Bell's Travels." I asked him whether I should read Du Halde's "Account of China." "Why, yes," said he, "as one reads such a book; that is to say, consult it."

He talked of the heinousness of the crime of adultery, by which the peace of families was destroyed. He said, "confusion of progeny constitutes the essence of the crime; and therefore a woman who breaks her marriage vows is much more criminal than a man who does it. A man, to be sure, is criminal in the sight of God; but he does not do his wife a very material injury, if he does not insult her; if, for instance, from mere wantonness of appetite, he steals privately to her chambermaid. Sir, a wife ought not greatly to resent this. I would not receive home a daughter who had run away from her husband on that account. A wife should study to reclaim her husband by more attention to please him. Sir, a man will not, once in a hundred instances, leave his wife and go to a harlot, if his wife has not been negligent of pleasing."

Here he discovered that acute discrimination, that solid judgment, and that knowledge of human nature, for which he was upon all occasions remarkable. Taking care to keep in view the moral and religious duty, as understood in our nation, he showed clearly from reason and good sense, the greater degree of culpability in the one sex deviating from it than the other; and, at the same time, inculcated a very useful lesson as to *the way to keep him*.

I asked him if it was not hard that one deviation from chastity should so absolutely ruin a young woman. JOHNSON: "Why no, Sir, it is the great principle which she is taught. When she has given up that principle, she has given up every notion of female honour and virtue, which are all included in chastity."

A gentleman talked to him of a lady whom he greatly admired and wished to marry, but was afraid of her superiority of talents. "Sir,"

intellectual powers, and uncommon ardour of soul. Would he had been a Christian! I cannot help earnestly venturing to hope that he is one now.—BOSWELL.

Maupertuis died in 1759 at the age of 62, in the arms of the Bernoullis, *tres Chretienement*.  
—EUSLEY

said he, "you need not be afraid; marry her. Before a year goes about, you'll find that reason much weaker, and that wit not so bright." Yet the gentleman may be justified in his apprehension by one of Dr. Johnson's admirable sentences in his life of Waller: "He doubtless praised many whom he would have been afraid to marry; and, perhaps, married one whom he would have been ashamed to praise. Many qualities contribute to domestic happiness, upon which poetry has no colours to bestow: and many airs and sallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve."

He praised Signor Baretti. "His account of Italy is a very entertaining book; and, Sir, I know no man who carries his head higher in conversation than Baretti. There are strong powers in his mind. He has not, indeed, many hooks; but with what hooks he has, he grapples very forcibly."

At this time I observed upon the dial-plate of his watch<sup>1</sup> a short Greek inscription, taken from the New Testament, *Νυξ γαρ ερχεται*, being the first words of our SAVIOUR'S solemn admonition to the improvement of that time which is allowed us to prepare for eternity: "The night cometh when no man can work." He some time afterwards laid aside this dial-plate; and when I asked him the reason, he said, "It might do very well upon a clock which a man keeps in his closet; but to have it upon his watch which he carries about with him, and which is often looked at by others, might be censured as ostentatious." Mr. Steevens is now possessed of the dial-plate inscribed as above.

He remained at Oxford a considerable time; I was obliged to go to London, where I received his letter, which had been returned from Scotland.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"MY DEAR BOSWELL,

*Oxford, March 23, 1768.*

"I have omitted a long time to write to you, without knowing very well why. I could now tell why I should not write; for who would write to men who publish the letters of their friends, without their leave? Yet I write to you in spite of my caution, to tell you that I shall be glad to see you, and that I wish you would empty your head of Corsica, which I think has filled it rather too long. But, at all events, I shall be glad, very glad, to see you.

"I am, Sir, yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I answered thus:—

"TO MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR,

*London, 26th April, 1768.*

"I have received your last letter, which, though very short, and by no means complimentary, yet gave me real pleasure, because it contains these words, 'I

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Hawkins says, that this watch was the first Johnson ever possessed. It was made for him by Mudge and Dutton in 1768. They were celebrated watchmakers of the last century, and their shop, situate at the left corner of Hind-court, was the last in Fleet-street to undergo the sweeping ordeal of modernisation, which it escaped up to the year 1850.

shall be glad, very glad, to see you.'—Surely you have no reason to complain of my publishing a single paragraph of one of your letters; the temptation to it was so strong. An irrevocable grant of your friendship, and your dignifying my desire of visiting Corsica with the epithet of 'a wise and noble curiosity,' are to me more valuable than many of the grants of kings.

"But how can you bid me 'empty my head of Corsica?' My noble-minded friend, do you not feel for an oppressed nation bravely struggling to be free? Consider fairly what is the case. The Corsicans never received any kindness from the Genoese. They never agreed to be subject to them. They owe them nothing; and when reduced to an abject state of slavery, by force, shall they not rise in the great cause of liberty, and break the galling yoke? And shall not every liberal soul be warm for them? Empty my head of Corsica! Empty it of honour, empty it of humanity, empty it of friendship, empty it of piety! No! while I live, Corsica and the cause of the brave islanders shall ever employ much of my attention, shall ever interest me in the sincerest manner. \* \* \* \* \*

"I am, &c.,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.

"MY DEAR DEAR LOVE,

*Oxford, April 18, 1768.*

You have had a very great loss. To lose an old friend, is to be cut off from a great part of the little pleasure that this life allows. But such is the condition of our nature, that as we live on we must see those whom we love drop successively, and find our circle of relation grow less and less, till we are almost unconnected with the world; and then it must soon be our turn to drop into the grave. There is always this consolation, that we have one Protector, who can never be lost but by our own fault; and every new experience of the uncertainty of all other comforts should determine us to fix our hearts where true joys are to be found. All union with the inhabitants of earth must in time be broken; and all the hopes that terminate here, must on [one] part or other end in disappointment.

"I am glad that Mrs. Adey and Mrs. Cobb do not leave you alone. Pay my respects to them, and the Swards, and all my friends. When Mr. Porter comes, he will direct you. Let me know of his arrival, and I will write to him.

"When I go back to London, I will take care of your reading glass. Whenever I can do anything for you, remember, my dear darling, that one of my greatest pleasures is to please you.

"The punctuality of your correspondence I consider as a proof of great regard. When we shall see each other I know not, but let us often think on each other, and think with tenderness. Do not forget me in your prayers. I have for a long time back been very poorly; but of what use is it to complain?

"Write often, for your letters always give great pleasure to,

"My dear, your most affectionate and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Upon his arrival in London in May, he surprised me one morning with a visit at my lodging in Half-moon-street, was quite satisfied with

my explanation, and was in the kindest and most agreeable frame of mind. As he had objected to a part of one of his letters being published, I thought it right to take this opportunity of asking him explicitly whether it would be improper to publish his letters after his death. His answer was, "Nay, Sir, when I am dead, you may do as you will."

He talked in his usual style with a rough contempt of popular liberty. "They make a rout about *universal* liberty, without considering that all that is to be valued, or indeed can be enjoyed by individuals, is *private* liberty. Political liberty is good only so far as it produces private liberty. Now, Sir, there is the liberty of the press, which you know is a constant topic. Suppose you and I and two hundred more were restrained from printing our thoughts; what then? What proportion would that restraint upon us bear to the private happiness of the nation?"

This mode of representing the inconveniences of restraint as light and insignificant, was a kind of sophistry in which he delighted to indulge himself, in opposition to the extreme laxity for which it has been fashionable for too many to argue, when it is evident, upon reflection, that the very essence of government is restraint; and certain it is, that as government produces rational happiness, too much restraint is better than too little. But when restraint is unnecessary, and so close as to gall those who are subject to it, the people may and ought to remonstrate; and, if relief is not granted, to resist. Of this manly and spirited principle, no man was more convinced than Johnson himself.

About this time Dr. Kenrick attacked him, through my sides, in a pamphlet, entitled "An Epistle to James Boswell, Esq., occasioned by his having transmitted the Moral Writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson to Pascal Paoli, General of the Corsicans." I was at first inclined to answer this pamphlet; but Johnson, who knew that my doing so would only gratify Kenrick, by keeping alive what would soon die away of itself, would not suffer me to take any notice of it.

His sincere regard for Francis Barber, his faithful negro servant, made him so desirous of his further improvement, that he now placed him at a school at Bishop Stortford, in Hertfordshire. This humane attention does Johnson's heart much honour. Out of many letters which Mr. Barber received from his master, he has preserved three, which he kindly gave me, and which I shall insert according to their dates.

"TO MR. FRANCIS BARBER.

"DEAR FRANCIS,

May 28, 1768.

"I have been very much out of order. I am glad to hear that you are well, and design to come soon to you. I would have you stay at Mrs. Clapp's for the present, till I can determine what we shall do. Be a good boy.

"My compliments to Mrs. Clapp and to Mr. Fowler.

"I am, yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Soon afterwards he supped at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in the Strand, with a company whom I collected to meet him. They were Dr. Percy, now Bishop of Dromore, Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, Mr. Langton, Dr. Robertson, the historian, Dr. Hugh Blair, and Mr. Thomas Davies, who wished much to be introduced to these eminent Scotch literati ; but on the present occasion he had very little



DR. ROBERTSON.

opportunity of hearing them talk, for with an excess of prudence, for which Johnson afterwards found fault with them, they hardly opened their lips, and that only to say something which they were certain would not expose them to the sword of Goliath ; such was their anxiety for their fame when in the presence of Johnson. He was this evening in remarkable vigour of mind, and eager to exert himself in conversation, which he did with great readiness and fluency ; but I am sorry to find that I have preserved but a small part of what passed.

He allowed high praise to Thomson as a poet ; but when one of the company said he was also a very good man, our moralist contested this with great warmth, accusing him of gross sensuality and licentiousness of manners. I was very much afraid that in writing Thomson's life, Dr. Johnson would have treated his private character with a stern severity, but I was agreeably disappointed ; and I may claim a little merit in it, from my having been at pains to send him authentic accounts of the affectionate and generous conduct of that poet to his sisters, one of whom, the wife of Mr. Thomson, schoolmaster at Lanark I knew, and was presented by her with three of his letters, one of which Dr. Johnson has inserted in his life.

He was vehement against old Dr. Mounsey,<sup>1</sup> of Chelsea College, as "a fellow who swore and talked bawdy." "I have often been in his company," said Dr. Percy, "and never heard him swear or talk bawdy." Mr. Davies, who sat next to Dr. Percy, having after this had some conversation aside with him, made a discovery which, in his zeal to pay court to Dr. Johnson, he eagerly proclaimed aloud from the foot of the

<sup>1</sup> Messenger Mounsey, M.D., died at his apartments in Chelsea College, Dec. 26, 1788, at the great age of ninety-five. An extraordinary direction in his will may be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 1, part II, p. 1183.—MALONE.



table: "Oh, Sir, I have found out a very good reason why Dr. Percy never heard Mounsey swear or talk bawdy, for he tells me he never saw him but at the Duke of Northumberland's table." "And so, Sir," said Dr. Johnson loudly to Dr. Percy, "you would shield this man from the charge of swearing and talking bawdy, because he did not do so at the Duke of Northumberland's table. Sir, you might as well tell us that you had seen him hold up his hand at the Old Bailey, and he neither swore nor talked bawdy; or that you had seen him in the cart at Tyburn, and he neither swore nor talked bawdy. And is it thus, Sir, that you presume to controvert what I have related?" Dr. Johnson's animadversion was uttered in such a manner, that Dr. Percy seemed to be displeased, and soon afterwards left the company, of which Johnson did not at that time take any notice.

Swift having been mentioned, Johnson, as usual, treated him with little respect as an author. Some of us endeavoured to support the Dean of St. Patrick's, by various arguments. One in particular praised his "Conduct of the Allies." JOHNSON: "Sir, his 'Conduct of the Allies' is a performance of very little ability." "Surely, Sir," said Dr. Douglas, "you must allow it has strong facts."<sup>1</sup> JOHNSON: "Why, yes, Sir; but what is that to the merit of the composition? In the Sessions-paper of the Old Bailey there are strong facts. House-breaking is a strong fact; robbery is a strong fact; and murder is a *mighty* strong fact: but is great praise due to the historian of those strong facts? No, Sir, Swift has told what he had to tell distinctly enough, but that is all. He had to count ten, and he has counted it right."—Then recollecting that Mr. Davies, by acting as an *informer*, had been the occasion of his talking somewhat too harshly to his friend Dr. Percy, for which, probably, when the first ebullition was over, he felt some compunction, he took an opportunity to give him a hit: so added, with a preparatory laugh, "Why, Sir, Tom Davies



DR. MOUNSEY.

<sup>1</sup> My respectable friend, upon reading this passage, observed that he probably must have said not simply "strong facts," but "strong facts well arranged." His lordship, however, knows too well the value of written documents to insist on setting his recollection against my notes taken at the time. He does not attempt to *traverse the record*. The fact, perhaps, may have been, either that the additional words escaped me in the noise of a numerous company, or that Dr. Johnson, from his impetuosity and eagerness to seize an opportunity to make a lively retort, did not allow Dr. Douglas to finish his sentence.—BOSWELL.

might have written the 'Conduct of the Allies.'" Poor Tom being thus suddenly dragged into ludicrous notice in presence of the Scottish Doctors, to whom he was ambitious of appearing to advantage, was grievously mortified. Nor did his punishment rest here; for upon subsequent occasions, whenever he, "statesman all o'er,"<sup>1</sup> assumed a strutting importance, I used to hail him—"The Author of the Conduct of the Allies."

When I called upon Dr. Johnson next morning, I found him highly satisfied with his colloquial prowess the preceding evening. "Well," said he, "we had good talk." BOSWELL: "Yes, Sir, you tossed and gored several persons."

The late Alexander Earl of Eglintoune, who loved wit more than wine, and men of genius more than sycophants, had a great admiration of Johnson; but from the remarkable elegance of his own manners, was, perhaps, too delicately sensible of the roughness which sometimes appeared in Johnson's behaviour. One evening about this time, when his lordship did me the honour to sup at my lodgings with Dr. Robertson and several other men of literary distinction, he regretted that Johnson had not been educated with more refinement, and lived more in polished society. "No, no, my Lord," said Signor Baretta, "do with him what you would, he would always have been a bear." "True," answered the Earl, with a smile, "but he would have been a *dancing* bear."

To obviate all the reflections which have gone round the world to Johnson's prejudice, by applying to him the epithet of a *bear*, let me impress upon my readers a just and happy saying of my friend Goldsmith, who knew him well: "Johnson, to be sure, has a roughness in his manner; but no man alive has a more tender heart. *He has nothing of the bear but his skin.*"

<sup>1</sup> See the hard drawing of him in Churchill's ROSCIAD.—BOSWELL.



STRATFORD JUBILEE.

### CHAPTER III.—1769.

JOHNSON APPOINTED PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT LITERATURE—BOSWELL AT THE STRATFORD JUBILEE—HIS ACCOUNT OF CORSICA—SCOTCH GARDENING—JOHNSON AND BOSWELL VISIT MR. AND MRS. THRALE—BOSWELL INTRODUCES JOHNSON TO GENERAL PAOLI—GOLDSMITH'S TAILOR—MRS. MONTAGU'S ESSAY ON SHAKSPEARE—FOOTE—BARRTT'S TRIAL—MRS. WILLIAMS'S TEA-TABLE—JOHNSON'S VIEWS OF ROMANISM AND CONVERSION TO POKERY—THE MARRIAGE SERVICE.

IN 1769, so far as I can discover, the public was favoured with nothing of Johnson's composition, either for himself or any of his friends. His "Meditations" too strongly prove that he suffered much both in body and mind; yet was he perpetually striving against *evil*, and nobly endeavouring to advance his intellectual and devotional improvement. Every generous and grateful heart must feel for the distresses of so eminent a benefactor to mankind; and now that his unhappiness is certainly known, must respect that dignity of character which prevented him from complaining.

His Majesty having the preceding year instituted the Royal Academy of Arts in London, Johnson had now the honour of being appointed Professor in Ancient Literature.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the year he wrote some letters to Mrs. Thrale, passed some part of the summer at Oxford and at Lichfield, and when at Oxford he wrote the following letter:—

<sup>1</sup> In which place he has been succeeded by Bennet Langton, Esq. When that truly religious gentleman was elected to this honorary Professorship, at the same time that Edward Gibbon, Esq., noted for introducing a kind of sneering infidelity into his Historical Writings, was elected Professor in Ancient History, in the room of Dr. Goldsmith, I observed that it brought to my mind, "Wicked Will Whiston and good Mr. Ditton."—I am now also of that admirable institution as Secretary for Foreign Correspondence, by the favour of the Academicians and the approbation of the sovereign.—BOSWELL

“ TO THE REVEREND MR. THOMAS WARTON.

“ DEAR SIR,

May 31, 1769.

“ Many years ago, when I used to read in the library of your college, I promised to recompense the college for that permission, by adding to their books a Baskerville's Virgil. I have now sent it, and desire you to deposit it on the shelves in my name.<sup>1</sup>

“ If you will be pleased to let me know when you have an hour of leisure, I will drink tea with you. I am engaged for the afternoon, to-morrow, and on Friday: all my mornings are my own.<sup>2</sup> I am, &c.,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

I came to London in the autumn, and having informed him that I was going to be married in a few months, I wished to have as much of



BOSWELL IN THE COSTUME OF A CORSICAN CHIEF.

his conversation as I could before engaging in a state of life which would probably keep me more in Scotland, and prevent me seeing him so often as when I was a single man; but I found he was at Brighthelmstone with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. I was very sorry that I had not his company with me at the Jubilee, in honour of Shakspeare, at Stratford-upon-Avon, the great poet's native town. Johnson's connection both with Shakspeare and Garrick founded a double claim to his presence; and it would have been highly gratifying to Mr. Garrick. Upon this occasion I particularly lamented that he had not that warmth of friendship for his brilliant pupil, which we may suppose would have had a benignant effect on both. When almost every man of eminence in the literary world was happy to partake in this festival of genius, the absence of Johnson could not but be wondered at

<sup>1</sup> “ It has this inscription in a blank leaf: ‘ *Hunc librum D. D. Samuel Johnson, eo quod hic loci studiis interdum vacaret.*’ Of this library, which is an old Gothic room, he was very fond. On my observing to him that some of the *modern* libraries of the University were more commodious and pleasant for study, as being more spacious and airy, he replied ‘ Sir, if a man has a mind to *prance*, he must study at Christ Church and All-Souls.’ ” — WARTON

<sup>2</sup> “ During this visit he seldom or never dined out. He appeared to be deeply engaged in some literary work. Miss Williams was now with him at Oxford.” — WARTON.

and regretted. The only trace of him there, was in the whimsical advertisement of a haberdasher, who sold *Shaksperian ribands* of various dyes; and, by way of illustrating their appropriation to the bard, introduced a line from the celebrated Prologue at the opening of Drury-lane theatre :

“Each change of *many-colour'd* life he drew.”

From Brighthelmstone Dr. Johnson wrote me the following letter, which they who may think I ought to have suppressed, must have less ardent feelings than I have always avowed.<sup>1</sup>

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

*Brighthelmstone, Sept. 9, 1769.*

“Why do you charge me with unkindness? I have omitted nothing that could do you good, or give you pleasure, unless it be that I have forborne to tell you my opinion of your ‘Account of Corsica.’ I believe my opinion, if you think well of my judgment, might have given you pleasure; but when it is considered how much vanity is excited by praise, I am not sure that it would have done you good. Your history is like other histories, but your Journal is, in a very high degree, curious and delightful. There is between the history and the journal that difference which there will always be found between notions borrowed from without, and notions generated within. Your history was copied from books; your journal rose out of your own experience and observation. You express images which operated strongly upon yourself, and you have impressed them with great force upon your readers. I know not whether I could name any narrative by which curiosity is better excited or better gratified.

“I am glad that you are going to be married; and as I wish you well in things of less importance, wish you well, with proportionate ardour, in this crisis of your life. What I can contribute to your happiness, I should be very unwilling to withhold: for I have always loved and valued you, and shall love you and value you still more, as you become more regular and useful: effects which a happy marriage will hardly fail to produce.

“I do not find that I am likely to come back very soon from this place. I

<sup>1</sup> In the Preface of my “Account of Corsica,” published in 1768, I thus express myself:—“He who publishes a book affecting not to be an author, and professing an indifference for literary fame, may possibly impose upon many people such an idea of his consequence as he wishes may be received. For my part I should be proud to be known as an author, and I have an ardent ambition for literary fame; for, of all possessions I should imagine literary fame to be the most valuable. A man who has been able to furnish a book, which has been approved by the world, has established himself as a respectable character in distant society, without any danger of having that character lessened by the observation of his weaknesses. To preserve an uniform dignity among those who see us every day, is hardly possible; and to aim at it, must put us under the fetters of perpetual restraint. The author of an approved book may allow his natural disposition an easy play, and yet indulge the pride of superior genius, when he considers that by those who know him only as an author, he never ceases to be respected. Such an author, when in his hours of gloom and discontent, may have the consolation to think that his writings are at that very time giving pleasure to numbers; and such an author may cherish the hope of being remembered after death; which has been a great object to the noblest minds in all ages.”—BOSWELL.

shall, perhaps, stay a fortnight longer: and a fortnight is a long time to a lover absent from his mistress. Would a fortnight ever have an end?

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

After his return to town, we met frequently, and I continued the practice of making notes of his conversation, though not with so much assiduity as I wish I had done. At this time, indeed, I had a sufficient excuse for not being able to appropriate so much time to my journal; for General Paoli, after Corsica had been overpowered by the monarchy of France, was now no longer at the head of his brave countrymen, but having with difficulty escaped from his native island, had sought an asylum in Great Britain; and it was my duty, as well as my pleasure, to attend much upon him. Such particulars of Johnson's conversation at this period as I have committed to writing, I shall here introduce, without any strict attention to methodical arrangement. Sometimes short notes of different days shall be blended together, and sometimes a day may seem important enough to be separately distinguished.

He said, he would not have Sunday kept with rigid severity and gloom, but with a gravity and simplicity of behaviour.

I told him that David Hume had made a short collection of Scotticisms. "I wonder," said Johnson, "that *he* should find them."<sup>1</sup>

He would not admit the importance of the question concerning the legality of general warrants. "Such a power," he observed, "must be vested in every government, to answer particular cases of necessity; and there can be no just complaint but when it is abused, for which those who administer government must be answerable. It is a matter of such indifference, a matter about which the people care so very little, that were a man to be sent over Britain to offer them an exemption from it at a halfpenny a piece, very few would purchase it." This was a specimen of that laxity of talking, which I had heard him fairly acknowledge; for, surely, while the power of granting general warrants was supposed to be legal, and the apprehension of them hung over our heads, we did not possess that security of freedom, congenial to our happy constitution, and which, by the intrepid exertions of Mr. Wilkes, has been happily established.

He said, "The duration of Parliament, whether for seven years or the life of the King, appears to me so immaterial, that I would not give half-a-crown to turn the scale one way or the other. The *habeas corpus* is the single advantage which our government has over that of other countries."

On the 30th of September we dined together at the Mitre. I attempted to argue for the superior happiness of the savage life, upon the

<sup>1</sup>The first edition of Hume's "History of England" was full of Scotticisms, many of which he corrected in subsequent editions.—MALONE.

usual fanciful topics. JOHNSON: "Sir, there can be nothing more false. The savages have no bodily advantages beyond those of civilized men. They have not better health; and as to care or mental uneasiness, they are not above it, but below it, like bears. No, Sir; you are not to talk such paradox: let me have no more on't. It cannot entertain, far less can it instruct. Lord Monboddo, one of your Scotch judges, talked a great deal of such nonsense. I suffered *him*, but I will not suffer *you*." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, does not Rousseau talk such nonsense?" JOHNSON: "True, Sir; but Rousseau *knows* he is talking nonsense, and laughs at the world for staring at him." BOSWELL: "How so, Sir?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, a man who talks nonsense so well, must know that he is talking nonsense. But I am *afraid* (chuckling and laughing) Monboddo does *not* know that he is talking nonsense." BOSWELL: "Is it wrong then, Sir, to affect singularity, in order to make people stare?" JOHNSON: "Yes, if you do it by propagating error; and, indeed, it is wrong in any way. There is in human nature a general inclination to make people stare; and every wise man has himself to cure of it, and does cure himself. If you wish to make people stare by doing better than others, why make them stare till they stare their eyes out. But consider how easy it is to make people stare, by being absurd. I may do it by going into a drawing-room without my shoes. You remember the gentleman in 'The Spectator,' who had a commission of lunacy taken out against him for his extreme singularity, such as never wearing a wig, but a night-cap. Now, Sir, abstractedly, the night-cap was best: but, relatively, the advantage was overbalanced by his making the boys run after him."<sup>2</sup>

Talking of a London life, he said, "The happiness of London is not to be conceived but by those who have been in it. I will venture to say, there is more learning and science within the circumference of ten miles from where we now sit, than in all the rest of the kingdom." BOSWELL: "The only disadvantage is the great distance at which people live from one another." JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir; but that is occasioned by the largeness of it, which is the cause of all the other advantages." BOSWELL: "Sometimes I have been in the humour of wishing to retire to a desert." JOHNSON: "Sir, you have desert enough in Scotland."

<sup>1</sup> His Lordship having frequently spoken in an abusive manner of Dr. Johnson in my company, I, on one occasion during the life-time of my illustrious friend, could not refrain from retaliation, and repeated to him this saying. He has since published I don't know how many pages in one of his curious books, attempting, in much anger, but with pitiful effect, to persuade mankind that my illustrious friend was not the great and good man which they esteemed and ever will esteem him to be.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> William Seward, Esq., F.R.S., editor of "Anecdotes of some Distinguished Persons," &c., in 4 vols. 8vo, well known to a numerous and valuable acquaintance for his literature, love of the fine arts, and social virtues. I am indebted to him for several communications concerning Johnson.—BOSWELL.

Mr. Seward was born in London in 1747, the son of a wealthy brewer, partner in the house of Calvert and Seward. He was educated at the Charter-house and at Oxford, and died April 24, 1799.—MALONE.

Although I had promised myself a great deal of instructive conversation with him on the conduct of the married state, of which I had then a near prospect, he did not say much upon that topic. Mr. Seward heard him once say, that "a man has a very bad chance for happiness in that state, unless he marries a woman of very strong and fixed principles of religion." He maintained to me, contrary to the common notion, that a woman would not be the worse wife for being learned; in which, from all that I have observed of *Artemisias*, I humbly differed from him. That a woman should be sensible and well informed, I allow to be a great advantage; and think that Sir Thomas Overbury, in his rude versification,<sup>1</sup> has very judiciously pointed out that degree of intelligence which is to be desired in a female companion:—

"Give me, next good, an *understanding wife*,  
 By Nature *wise*, not *learned* by much art;  
 Some *knowledge* on her side with all my life  
 More scope of conversation impart;  
 Besides, her inborne virtue fortifie;  
 They are most firmly good, who best know why."

When I censured a gentleman of my acquaintance for marrying a second time, as it showed a disregard of his first wife, he said, "Not at all, Sir. On the contrary, were he not to marry again, it might be concluded that his first wife had given him a disgust to marriage; but by taking a second wife he pays the highest compliment to the first, by showing that she made him so happy as a married man, that he wishes to be so a second time." So ingenious a turn did he give to this delicate question. And yet, on another occasion, he owned that he once had almost asked a promise of Mrs. Johnson that she would not marry again, but had checked himself. Indeed, I cannot help thinking, that in his case the request would have been unreasonable; for if Mrs. Johnson forgot, or thought it no injury to the memory of her first love—the husband of her youth and the father of her children—to make a second marriage, why should she be precluded from a third, should she be so inclined? In Johnson's persevering fond appropriation of his *Tetty*, even after her decease, he seems totally to have overlooked the prior claim of the honest Birmingham trader. I presume that her having been married before had, at times, given him some uneasiness; for I remember his observing upon the marriage of one of our common friends, "He has done a very foolish thing; he has married a widow, when he might have had a maid."

We drank tea with Mrs. Williams. I had last year the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Thrale at Dr. Johnson's one morning, and had conversation enough with her to admire her talents, and to show her that I was as Johnsonian as herself. Dr. Johnson had probably been kind enough to

<sup>1</sup> "A Wife," a poem, 1614.—BOSWELL.



speak well of me, for this evening he delivered me a very polite card from Mr. Thrale and her, inviting me to Streatham.

On the 6th of October I complied with this obliging invitation, and found, at an elegant villa, six miles from town, every circumstance that can make society pleasing. Johnson, though quite at home, was yet looked up to with an awe, tempered by affection, and seemed to be equally the care of his host and hostess. I rejoiced at seeing him so happy.

He played off his wit against Scotland with a good-humoured pleasantry, which gave me, though no bigot to national prejudices, an opportunity for a little contest with him. I having said that England was obliged to us for gardeners, almost all their good gardeners being Scotchmen—JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, that is because gardening is much more necessary amongst you than with us, which makes so many of your people learn it. It is *all* gardening with you. Things which grow wild here, must be cultivated with great care in Scotland. Pray now," throwing himself back in his chair, and laughing, "are you ever able to bring the *sloe* to perfection?"

I boasted that we had the honour of being the first to abolish the inhospitable, troublesome, and ungracious custom of giving veils to servants. JOHNSON: "Sir, you abolished veils because you were too poor to be able to give them."

Mrs. Thrale disputed with him on the merit of Prior. He attacked him powerfully; said he wrote of love like a man who had never felt it: his love verses were college verses; and he repeated the song "Alexis shunn'd his fellow swains," &c., in so ludicrous a manner, as to make us all wonder how any one could have been pleased with such fantastical stuff. Mrs. Thrale stood to her gun with great courage in defence of amorous ditties, which Johnson despised, till he at last silenced her by saying, "My dear lady, talk no more of this. Nonsense can be defended but by nonsense."

Mrs. Thrale then praised Garrick's talents for light gay poetry; and, as a specimen, repeated his song in "Florizel and Perdita," and dwelt with peculiar pleasure on this line:

"I'd smile with the simple, and feed with the poor."

JOHNSON: "Nay, my dear lady, this will never do. Poor David! Smile with the simple. What folly is that? And who would feed with the poor that can help it? No, no; let me smile with the wise, and feed with the rich." I repeated this sally to Garrick, and wondered to find his sensibility as a writer not a little irritated by it. To soothe him I observed that Johnson spared none of us; and I quoted the passage in Horace, in which he compares one who attacks his friends for the sake of a laugh, to a pushing ox, that is marked by a bunch of hay put upon his horns: *fœnum habet in cornu.*" "Ay," said Garrick, vehemently, "he has a whole *mow* of it."

Talking of history, Johnson said, "We may know historical facts to be true, as we may know facts in common life to be true. Motives are generally unknown. We cannot trust to the characters we find in history, unless when they are drawn by those who knew the persons; as those, for instance, by Sallust and by Lord Clarendon."

He would not allow much merit to Whitfield's oratory. "His popularity, Sir," said he, "is chiefly owing to the peculiarity of his manner. He would be followed by crowds were he to wear a night-cap in the pulpit, or were he to preach from a tree."

I know not from what spirit of contradiction he burst out into a violent declamation against the Corsicans, of whose heroism I talked in high terms. "Sir," said he, "what is all this rout about the Corsicans? They have been at war with the Genoese for upwards of twenty years, and have never yet taken their fortified towns. They might have battered down their walls and reduced them to powder in twenty years. They might have pulled the walls in pieces, and cracked the stones with their teeth in twenty years." It was in vain to argue with him upon the want of artillery; he was not to be resisted for the moment.

On the evening of October 10, I presented Dr. Johnson to General Paoli.<sup>1</sup> I had greatly wished that two men, for whom I had the highest esteem, should meet. They met with a manly ease, mutually conscious of their own abilities, and of the abilities of each other. The General spoke Italian, and Dr. Johnson English, and understood one another very well, with a little aid of interpretation from me, in which I compared myself to an isthmus which joins two great continents. Upon Johnson's



GENERAL PAOLI.

<sup>1</sup> Pascal Paoli was born at Stretta, in Corsica, followed his father into exile, and was educated at the Jesuit's College at Naples. His countrymen having elected him their generalissimo, he returned to Corsica and acted vigorously and successfully against the encroachments of the Genoese; but on their transferring the island to the French monarchy, he was eventually overpowered by its army, and sought refuge in England in 1769, where having obtained a pension of 1200*l.* a-year, he resided until 1789. The French Revolution having caused the island of Corsica to be recognised as a department of France, Paoli went to Paris in 1790, accompanied by deputies, and presented himself at the bar of the National Assembly, where he was received with enthusiasm, and took the oath of allegiance to the French government. The progress of the Revolution, however, disappointed the hopes he had conceived of ameliorating the condition of his country, and encouraged by assistance from Great Britain, he abandoned his allegiance to France. The result was a short-lived annexation

to the British territory, and the eventual return of Paoli to England in embarrassed circumstances. The Government restored to him his pension and he resided in the metropolis until his death in 1807.—Ed.

approach, the General said, "From what I have read of your works, Sir, and from what Mr. Boswell has told me of you, I have long held you in great veneration." The General talked of languages being formed on the particular notions and manners of a people, without knowing which, we cannot know the language. We may know the direct signification of single words; but by these no beauty of expression, no sally of genius, no wit is conveyed to the mind. All this must be by allusion to other ideas. "Sir," said Johnson, "you talk of language, as if you had never done anything else but study it, instead of governing a nation." The General said, "*Questo è un troppo gran complimento:*" this is too great a compliment. Johnson answered, "I should have thought so, Sir, if I had not heard you talk." The General asked him what he thought of the spirit of infidelity which was so prevalent. JOHNSON: "Sir, this gloom of infidelity, I hope, is only a transient cloud passing through the hemisphere, which will soon be dissipated, and the sun break forth with his usual splendour." "You think then," said the General, "that they will change their principles like their clothes." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, if they bestow no more thought on principles than on dress, it must be so." The General said, that "a great part of the fashionable infidelity was owing to a desire of showing courage. Men who have no opportunities of showing it as to things in this life, take death and futurity as objects on which to display it." JOHNSON: "That is mighty foolish affectation. Fear is one of the passions of human nature, of which it is impossible to divest it. You remember that the Emperor Charles V. when he read upon the tombstone of a Spanish nobleman, 'Here lies one who never knew fear,' wittily said, 'Then he never snuffed a candle with his fingers.'"

He talked a few words of French to the General; but finding he did not do it with facility, he asked for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote the following note:—

"*J'ai lu dans la géographie de Lucas de Linda un Pater-noster écrit dans une langue tout-à-fait différente de l'Italienne, et de toutes autres lesquelles se dérivent du Latin. L'auteur l'appelle linguam Corsicæ rusticam: elle a peut-être passé, peu à peu; mais elle a certainement prévalu autrefois dans les montagnes et dans la campagne. Le même auteur dit la même chose en parlant de la Sardaigne; qu'il y a deux langues dans l'Isle, une des villes, l'autre de la campagne.*"

The General immediately informed him that the *lingua rustica* was only in Sardinia.

Dr. Johnson went home with me, and drank tea till late in the night. He said, "General Paoli had the loftiest port of any man he had ever seen." He denied that military men were always the best bred men. "Perfect good breeding," he observed, "consists in having no particular mark of any profession, but a general elegance of manners; whereas, in a military man, you can commonly distinguish the *brand* of a soldier, *l'homme d'épée.*"

Dr. Johnson shunned to-night any discussion of the perplexed question of fate and free will, which I attempted to agitate: "Sir," said he, "we know our will is free, and *there's* an end on't."

He honoured me with his company at dinner on the 16th of October, at my lodgings in Old Bond-street, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Bickerstaff, and Mr. Thomas Davies. Garrick played round him with a fond vivacity, taking hold of the breasts of his coat, and, looking up in his face with a lively archness, complimented him on the good health which he seemed then to enjoy; while the sage, shaking his head, beheld him with a gentle complacency. One of the company not being come at the appointed hour, I proposed, as usual upon such occasions, to order dinner to be served; adding, "Ought six people to be kept waiting for one?" "Why, yes," answered Johnson, with a delicate humanity, "if the one will suffer more by your sitting down than the six will do by waiting." Goldsmith, to divert the



OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

tedious minutes, strutted about bragging of his dress, and I believe was seriously vain of it, for his mind was wonderfully prone to such impressions, "Come, come," said Garrick, "talk no more of that. You are perhaps the worst—eh, eh!" Goldsmith was eagerly attempting to interrupt him, when Garrick went on, laughing ironically, "Nay, you will always *look* like a gentleman; but I am talking of being well or *ill drest*." "Well, let me tell you," said Goldsmith, "when my tailor brought home my bloom-coloured coat, he said, 'Sir, I have a favour to beg of you.

When anybody asks you who made

your clothes, be pleased to mention John Filby, at the Harrow, in Water-lane.'"

JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, that was because he knew the strange colour would attract crowds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat even of so absurd a colour."

After dinner our conversation first turned upon Pope. Johnson said, his characters of men were admirably drawn, those of women not so well. He repeated to us, in his forcible melodious manner, the concluding lines of the *Dunciad*.<sup>1</sup> While he was talking loudly in praise of those lines, one of the company ventured to say, "Too fine for such a

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Langton informed me that he once related to Johnson (on the authority of Spence) that Pope himself admired those lines so much, that when he repeated them, his voice faltered; "and well it might, Sir," said Johnson, "for they are noble lines."—J. BOSWELL, JUN.

poem:—a poem on what?" JOHNSON (with a disdainful look): "Why, on *dunces*. It was worth while being a dunce then. Ah, Sir, hadst *thou* lived in those days! It is not worth while being a dunce now, when there are no wits." Bickerstaff observed, as a peculiar circumstance, that Pope's fame was higher when he was alive than it was then. Johnson said, his Pastorals were poor things, though the versification was fine. He told us, with high satisfaction, the anecdote of Pope's inquiring who was the author of his "London," and saying, he will be soon *déterré*. He observed, that in Dryden's poetry there were passages drawn from a profundity which Pope could never reach. He repeated some fine lines on love, by the former (which I have now forgotten), and gave great applause to the character of Zimri. Goldsmith said, that Pope's character of Addison showed a deep knowledge of the human heart. Johnson said, that the description of the temple, in "The Mourning Bride,"<sup>1</sup> was the finest poetical passage he had ever read; he recollected none in Shakspeare equal to it.—"But," said Garrick, all alarmed for "the God of his idolatry," "we know not the extent and variety of his powers. We are to suppose there are such passages in his works. Shakspeare must not suffer from the badness of our memories." Johnson, diverted by this enthusiastic jealousy, went on with great ardour: "No, Sir; Congreve has *nature*;" (smiling on the tragic eagerness of Garrick); but composing himself, he added, "Sir, this is not comparing Congreve on the whole with Shakspeare on the whole; but only maintaining that Congreve has one finer passage than any that can be found in Shakspeare. Sir, a man may have no more than ten guineas in the world, but he may have those ten guineas in one piece; and so may have a finer piece than a man who has ten thousand pounds: but then he has only one ten-guinea piece.—What I mean is, that you can show me no passage, where there is simply a description of material objects, without any intermixture of moral notions,<sup>2</sup> which produces such an effect." Mr. Murphy mentioned Shakspeare's description of the night before the battle of Agincourt; but it was observed it had *men* in it. Mr. Davies suggested the speech of Juliet, in which she figures herself awaking in the tomb of her ancestors. Some one mentioned the description of Dover Cliff. JOHNSON: "No, Sir; it should be all precipice—all vacuum. The crows impede your fall. The

Act. ii., sc. 3.—MALONE.

"How reverend is the face of this tall pile,  
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,  
To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,  
By its own weight made steadfast and unmoveable,  
Looking tranquillity! It strikes an awe  
And terror on my aching sight."

<sup>2</sup> In Congreve's description there seems to be an *intermixture of moral notions*; as the affecting power of the passage arises from the vivid impression of the described objects on the mind of the speaker: "And shoots a chillness," &c.—KEARNEY.

diminished appearance of the boats, and other circumstances, are all very good description ; but do not impress the mind at once with the horrible idea of immense height. The impression is divided ; you pass on by computation, from one stage of the tremendous space to another. Had the girl in 'The Mourning Bride' said, she could not cast her shoe to the top of one of the pillars in the temple, it would not have aided the idea, but weakened it."

Talking of a barrister who had a bad utterance, some one (to rouse Johnson) wickedly said, that he was unfortunate in not having been taught oratory by Sheridan. JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, if he had been taught by Sheridan, he would have cleared the room." GARRICK: "Sheridan has too much vanity to be a good man."—We shall now see Johnson's mode of *defending* a man ; taking him into his own hands, and discriminating. JOHNSON: "No, Sir. There is, to be sure, in Sheridan, something to reprehend and everything to laugh at ; but, Sir, he is not a bad man. No, Sir ; were mankind to be divided into good and bad, he would stand considerably within the ranks of good. And, Sir, it must be allowed that Sheridan excels in plain declamation, though he can exhibit no character."

I should, perhaps, have suppressed this disquisition concerning a person of whose merit and worth I think with respect, had he not attacked Johnson so outrageously in his *Life of Swift*, and at the same time, treated us, his admirers, as a set of pigmies. He who has provoked the lash of wit, cannot complain that he smarts from it.

Mrs. Montague, a lady distinguished for having written an *Essay on Shakspeare*, being mentioned—REYNOLDS: "I think that essay does her honour." JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir ; it does *her* honour, but it would do nobody else honour. I have, indeed, not read it all. But when I take up the end of a web, and find it packthread, I do not expect, by looking further, to find embroidery. Sir, I will venture to say, there is not one sentence of true criticism in her book." GARRICK: "But, Sir, surely it shows how much Voltaire has mistaken Shakspeare, which nobody else has done." JOHNSON: "Sir, nobody else has thought it worth while. And what merit is there in that ? You may as well praise a schoolmaster for whipping a boy who has construed ill. No, Sir, there is no real criticism in it : none showing the beauty of thought, as formed on the workings of the human heart."

The admirers of this *Essay*<sup>1</sup> may be offended at the slighting manner

<sup>1</sup> Of whom I acknowledge myself to be one, considering it as a piece of the secondary or comparative species of criticism ; and not of that profound species which alone Dr. Johnson would allow to be "real criticism." It is, besides, clearly and elegantly expressed, and has done effectually what it professed to do ; namely, vindicated Shakspeare from the misrepresentations of Voltaire ; and considering how many young people were misled by his witty, though false observations, Mrs. Montague's *Essay* was of service to Shakspeare with a certain class of readers, and is, therefore, entitled to praise. Johnson, I am assured, allowed the merit which I have stated, saying (with reference to Voltaire), "it is conclusive *ad hominem*."—BOSWELL.

in which Johnson spoke of it ; but let it be remembered, that he gave his honest opinion unbiassed by any prejudice, or any proud jealousy of a woman intruding herself into the chair of criticism ; for Sir Joshua Reynolds has told me, that when the *Essay* first came out, and it was not known who had written it, Johnson wondered how Sir Joshua could like it. At this time Sir Joshua himself had received no information concerning the author, except being assured by one of our most eminent literati, that it was clear its author did not know the Greek tragedies in the original. One day at Sir Joshua's table, when it was related that Mrs. Montague, in an excess of compliment to the author of a modern tragedy, had exclaimed, "I tremble for Shakspeare," Johnson said, "When Shakspeare has got —— for his rival, and Mrs. Montague for his defender, he is in a poor state indeed."

Johnson proceeded: "The Scotchman has taken the right method in his '*Elements of Criticism*.' I do not mean that he has taught us anything ; but he has told us old things in a new way." MURPHY: "He seems to have read a great deal of French criticism, and wants to make it his own ; as if he had been for years anatomising the heart of man, and peeping into every cranny of it." GOLDSMITH: "It is easier to write that book than to read it." JOHNSON: "We have an example of true criticism in Burke's '*Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* ;' and, if I recollect, there is also Du Bos ; and Bouhours, who shows all beauty to depend on truth. There is no great merit in telling how many plays have ghosts in them, and how this ghost is better than that. You must show, how terror is impressed on the human heart.—In the description of night in *Macbeth*, the beetle and the bat detract from the general idea of darkness,—inspissated gloom."

Politics being mentioned, he said, "This petitioning is a new mode of distressing government, and a mighty easy one. I will undertake to get petitions either against quarter guineas or half guineas, with the help of a little hot wine. There must be no yielding to encourage this. The object is not important enough. We are not to blow up half a dozen palaces, because one cottage is burning."

The conversation then took another turn. JOHNSON: "It is amazing what ignorance of certain points one sometimes finds in men of eminence. A wit about town, who wrote Latin bawdy verses, asked me, how it happened that England and Scotland, which were once two kingdoms, were now one ; and Sir Fletcher Norton did not seem to know that there were such publications as the *Reviews*."

"The ballad of *Hardyknute* has no great merit, if it be really ancient.<sup>1</sup> People talk of nature. But mere obvious nature may be exhibited with very little power of mind."

<sup>1</sup> It is unquestionably a modern fiction. It was written by Sir John Bruce, of Kinross and first published at Edinburgh in folio, in 1719. See "*Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*," vol. ii., pp. 96, 111, 4th edit.—MALONE.

On Thursday, October 19, I passed the evening with him at his house. He advised me to complete a Dictionary of words peculiar to Scotland, of which I showed him a specimen. "Sir," said he, "Ray has made a collection of north country words. By collecting those of your country, you will do a useful thing towards the history of the language." He bade me also go on with collections which I was making upon the antiquities of Scotland. "Make a large book—a folio." BOSWELL: "But of what use will it be, Sir?" JOHNSON: "Never mind the use; do it."

I complained that he had not mentioned Garrick in his Preface to Shakspeare: and asked him if he did not admire him. JOHNSON: "Yes, as 'a poor player, who frets and struts his hour upon the stage'—as a shadow." BOSWELL: "But has he not brought Shakspeare into notice?" JOHNSON: "Sir, to allow that, would be to lampoon the age. Many of Shakspeare's plays are the worse for being acted: Macbeth, for instance." BOSWELL: "What, Sir! is nothing gained by decoration and action? Indeed, I do wish that you had mentioned Garrick." JOHNSON: "My dear Sir, had I mentioned him, I must have mentioned many more: Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber,—nay, and Mr. Cibber too: he, too, altered Shakspeare." BOSWELL: "You have read his apology, Sir?" JOHNSON: "Yes, it is very entertaining. But as for Cibber himself, taking from his conversation all that he ought not to have said, he was a poor creature. I remember when he brought me one of his Odes to have my opinion of it, I could not bear such nonsense, and would not let him read it to the end: so little respect had I for *that great man!* (laughing). Yet I remember Richardson wondering that I could treat him with familiarity."

I mentioned to him that I had seen the execution of several convicts at Tyburn, two days before, and that none of them seemed to be under any concern. JOHNSON: "Most of them, Sir, have never thought at all." BOSWELL: "But is not the fear of death natural to man?" JOHNSON: "So much so, Sir, that the whole of life is but keeping away the thoughts of it." He then, in a low and earnest tone, talked of his meditating upon the awful hour of his own dissolution, and in what manner he should conduct himself upon that occasion: "I know not," said he, "whether I should wish to have a friend by me, or have it all between GOD and myself." Talking of our feeling for the distresses of others—JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, there is much noise made about it, but it is greatly exaggerated. No, Sir, we have a certain degree of feeling to prompt us to do good; more than that, providence does not intend. It would be misery to no purpose." BOSWELL: "But suppose now, Sir, that one of your intimate friends were apprehended for an offence for which he might be hanged." JOHNSON: "I should do what I could to bail him, and give him any other assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged, I should not suffer." BOSWELL: "Would you eat your dinner



that day, Sir?" JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir, and eat it as if he were eating with me. Why, there's Baretti, who is to be tried for his life to-morrow; friends have risen up for him on every side; yet if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of plum pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind."

I told him that I had dined lately at Foote's, who showed me a letter which he had received from Tom Davies, telling him that he had not been able to sleep from the concern he felt on account of "*this sad affair of Baretti*;" begging of him to try if he could suggest any thing that might be of service; and, at the same time, recommending to him an industrious young man who kept a pickle shop. JOHNSON: "Ay, Sir, here you have a specimen of human sympathy: a friend hanged, and a cucumber pickled. We know not whether Baretti or the pickle-man has kept Davies from sleep: nor does he know himself. And as to his not sleeping, Sir, Tom Davies is a very great man; Tom has been upon the stage, and knows how to do those things: I have not been upon the stage, and cannot do those things." BOSWELL: "I have often blamed myself, Sir, for not feeling for others as sensibly as many say they do." JOHNSON: "Sir, don't be duped by them any more. You will find these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good. They pay you by *feeling*."

BOSWELL: "Foote has a great deal of humour." JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir." BOSWELL: "He has a singular talent of exhibiting character." JOHNSON: "Sir, it is not a talent—it is a vice; it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy, which exhibits the character of a species, as that of a miser gathered from many misers: it is farce, which exhibits individuals." BOSWELL: "Did not he think of exhibiting you, Sir?" JOHNSON: "Sir, fear restrained him; he knew I would have broken his bones. I would have saved him the trouble of cutting off a leg; I would not have left him a leg to cut off." BOSWELL: "Pray, Sir, is not Foote an infidel?" JOHNSON: "I do not know, Sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject."<sup>1</sup> BOSWELL: "I suppose, Sir, he has thought superficially,



FOOTE AS MAJOR STURGEON.

<sup>1</sup> When Mr. Foote was at Edinburgh, he thought fit to entertain a numerous Scotch company, with a great deal of coarse jocularities, at the expense of Dr. Johnson, imagining it would be acceptable. I felt this as not civil to me; but sat very patiently till he had exhausted his merriment on that subject; and then observed, that surely Johnson must be

and seized the first notions which occurred to his mind." JOHNSON: "Why then, Sir, still he is like a dog, that snatches the piece next him. Did you never observe that dogs have not the power of comparing? A dog will take a small bit of meat as readily as a large, when both are before him."

"Buchanan," he observed, "has fewer *centos* than any modern Latin Poet. He has not only had great knowledge of the Latin language, but was a great poetical genius. Both the Scaligers praise him."

He again talked of the passage in Congreve with high commendation, and said, "Shakspeare never has six lines together without a fault. Perhaps you may find seven; but this does not refute my general assertion. If I come to an orchard and say there's no fruit here, and then comes a poring man, who finds two apples and three pears, and tells me, 'Sir, you are mistaken, I have found both apples and pears,' I should laugh at him: what would that be to the purpose?"

BOSWELL: "What do you think of Dr. Young's 'Night Thoughts,' Sir?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, there are very fine things in them."

BOSWELL: "Is there not less religion in the nation now, Sir, than there was formerly?" JOHNSON: "I don't know, Sir, that there is."

BOSWELL: "For instance, there used to be a chaplain in every great family, which we do not find now." JOHNSON: "Neither do you find any of the state servants which great families used formerly to have. There is a change of modes in the whole department of life."

Next day, October 20, he appeared, for the only time I suppose in his life, as a witness in a court of justice, being called to give evidence to the character of Mr. Baretto, who having stabbed a man in the street, was arraigned at the Old Bailey for murder. Never did such a constellation of genius enlighten the awful Sessions-house, emphatically called Justice-hall: Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Beauclerk, and Dr. Johnson; and undoubtedly their favourable testimony had due weight with the court and Jury. Johnson gave his evidence in a slow, deliberate, and distinct manner, which was uncommonly impressive. It is well known that Mr. Baretto was acquitted.

On the 26th of October, we dined together at the Mitre Tavern. He found fault with Foote for indulging his talent of ridicule at the expense of his visitors, which I colloquially termed making fools of his company. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, when you go to see Foote, you do not go to see a saint; you go to see a man who will be entertained at your house, and

allowed to have some sterling wit, and that I had heard him say a very good thing of Mr. Foote himself. "Ah, my old Friend Sam," cried Foote, "no man says better things: do let us have it." Upon which I told the above story, which produced a very loud laugh from the company. But I never saw Foote so disconcerted. He looked grave and angry, and entered into a serious refutation of the justice of the remark. "What, Sir," said he, "talk thus of a man of liberal education—a man who for years was at the University of Oxford—a man who has added sixteen new characters to the English drama of his country!"—

BOSWELL.

then bring you on a public stage ; who will entertain you at his house for the very purpose of bringing you on a public stage. Sir, he does not make fools of his company ; they whom he exposes are fools already ; he only brings them into action."

Talking of trade, he observed, "It is a mistaken notion that a vast deal of money is brought into a nation by trade. It is not so. Commodities come from commodities ; but trade produces no capital accession of wealth. However, though there should be little profit in money, there is a considerable profit in pleasure, as it gives to one nation the productions of another ; as we have wines and fruits, and many other foreign articles brought to us." BOSWELL : "Yes, Sir, and there is a profit in pleasure, by its furnishing occupation to such numbers of mankind." JOHNSON : "Why, Sir, you cannot call that pleasure to which all are averse, and which none begin but with the hope of leaving off ; a thing which men dislike before they have tried it, and when they have tried it." BOSWELL : "But, Sir, the mind must be employed, and we grow weary when idle." JOHNSON : "That is, Sir, because others being busy, we want company ; but if we were all idle, there would be no growing weary ; we should all entertain one another. There is, indeed, this in trade :—it gives men an opportunity of improving their situation. If there were no trade, many who are poor would always remain poor. But no man loves labour for itself." BOSWELL : "Yes, Sir, I know a person who does. He is a very laborious judge, and he loves the labour." JOHNSON : "Sir, that is because he loves respect and distinction. Could he have them without labour, he would like it less." BOSWELL : "He tells me he likes it for itself."—"Why, Sir, he fancies so, because he is not accustomed to abstract."



MRS. WILLIAMS.

We went home to his house to tea. Mrs. Williams made it with sufficient dexterity, notwithstanding her blindness, though her manner of satisfying herself that the cups were full enough appeared to me a little awkward ; for I fancied she put her finger down a certain way, till she felt the tea touch it.<sup>1</sup> In my first elation at being allowed the privilege of attending Dr. Johnson at his late visits to this lady, which

<sup>1</sup> I have since had reason to think that I was mistaken ; for I have been informed by a lady, who was long intimate with her, and likely to be a more accurate observer of such matters, that she had acquired such a niceness of touch as to know, by the feeling on the outside of the cup, how near it was to being full.—BOSWELL.

was like being *è secretioribus consiliis*, I willingly drank cup after cup, as if it had been the Heliconian spring. But as the charm of novelty went off, I grew more fastidious; and besides, I discovered that she was of a peevish temper.

There was a pretty large circle this evening. Dr. Johnson was in very good humour, lively, and ready to talk upon all subjects. Mr. Fergusson,<sup>1</sup> the self-taught philosopher, told him of a new invented machine which went without horses; a man who sat in it turned a handle, which worked a spring that drove it forward. "Then, Sir," said Johnson, "what is gained is, the man has his choice whether he will move himself alone, or himself and the machine too." Dominicetti being mentioned, he would not allow him any merit. "There is nothing in all this boasted system. No, Sir; medicated baths can be no better than warm water; their only effect can be that of tepid moisture." One of the company took the other side, maintaining that medicines of various sorts, and some too of most powerful effect, are introduced into the human frame by the medium of the pores; and, therefore, when warm water is impregnated with salutiferous substances, it may produce great effects as a bath. This appeared to me very satisfactory. Johnson did not answer it; but talking for victory, and determined to be master of the field, he had recourse to the device which Goldsmith imputed to him in the witty words of one of Cibber's comedies: "There is no arguing with Johnson; for when his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt-end of it." He turned to the gentleman, "Well, Sir, go to Dominicetti, and get thyself fumigated; but be sure that the steam be directed to thy *head*, for *that* is the *peccant part*." This produced a triumphant roar of laughter from the motley assembly of philosophers, printers, and dependents, male and female.

I know not how so whimsical a thought came into my mind, but I asked, "If, Sir, you were shut up in a castle, and a new-born child with you, what would you do?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, I should not much like my company." BOSWELL: "But would you take the trouble of rearing it?" He seemed, as may well be supposed, unwilling to pursue the subject; but upon my persevering in my question, replied, "Why yes, Sir, I would; but I must have all conveniences. If I had no garden, I would make a shed on the roof, and take it there for fresh air. I should feed it, and wash it much, and with warm water to

<sup>1</sup> James Fergusson was the son of a labourer, and born in 1710, at Keith, in Banffshire, Scotland. He learned to read in infancy by hearing his father teach one of his brothers; when only eight years of age he constructed a wooden clock. When old enough to work he was placed out as a servant to a farmer, and while tending his master's sheep he acquired a surprising knowledge of the stars, and constructed a celestial globe. Some neighbouring gentlemen, seeing his natural abilities, had him instructed. Eventually he went to Edinburgh, and chiefly supported himself by drawing miniature portraits with Indian ink, which profession he afterwards followed on his arrival in London. He wrote several volumes of mathematical and miscellaneous works, and died in 1776.—Ed.

please it, not with cold water to give it pain." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, does not heat relax?" JOHNSON: "Sir, you are not to imagine the water is to be very hot. I would not *coddle* the child. No, Sir, the hardy method of treating children does no good. I'll take you five children from London, who shall cuff five Highland children. Sir, a man bred in London will carry a burden, or run, or wrestle, as well as a man brought up in the hardest manner in the country." BOSWELL: "Good living, I suppose, makes the Londoners strong." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, I don't know that it does. Our chairmen from Ireland, who are as strong men as any, have been brought up upon potatoes. Quantity makes up for quality." BOSWELL: "Would you teach this child that I have furnished you with anything?" JOHNSON: "No, I should not be apt to teach it." BOSWELL: "Would not you have a pleasure in teaching it?" JOHNSON: "No, Sir, I should *not* have a pleasure in teaching it." BOSWELL: "Have you not a pleasure in teaching men? *There* I have you. You have the same pleasure in teaching men that I should have in teaching children." JOHNSON: "Why, something about that."

BOSWELL: "Do you think, Sir, that what is called natural affection is born with us? It seems to me to be the effect of habit, or of gratitude for kindness. No child has it for a parent whom it has not seen." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, I think there is an instinctive natural affection in parents towards their children."

Russia being mentioned as likely to become a great empire, by the rapid increase of population:—JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, I see no prospect of their propagating more. They can have no more children than they can get. I know of no way to make them breed more than they do. It is not from reason and prudence that people marry, but from inclination. A man is poor; he thinks, 'I cannot be worse, and so I'll e'en take Peggy.'" BOSWELL: "But have not nations been more populous at one period than another?" JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir; but that has been owing to the people being less thinned at one period than another, whether by emigrations, war, or pestilence, not by their being more or less prolific. Births at all times bear the same proportion to the same number of people." BOSWELL: "But to consider the state of our own country: does not throwing a number of farms into one hand hurt population!" JOHNSON: "Why no, Sir; the same quantity of food being produced, will be consumed by the same number of mouths, though the people may be disposed of in different ways. We see, if corn be dear and butchers' meat cheap, the farmers all apply themselves to the raising of corn, till it becomes plentiful and cheap, and then butchers' meat becomes dear; so that an equality is always preserved. No, Sir, let fanciful men do as they will, depend upon it, it is difficult to disturb the system of life." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, is it not a very bad thing for landlords to oppress their tenants, by raising their rents?"

JOHNSON: "Very bad. But, Sir, it can never have any general influence; it may distress some individuals. For, consider this: landlords cannot do without tenants. Now, tenants will not give more for land than land is worth. If they can make more of their money by keeping a shop, or any other way, they'll do it, and so oblige landlords to let land come back to a reasonable rent, in order that they may get tenants. Land in England is an article of commerce. A tenant who pays his landlord his rent, thinks himself no more obliged to him than you think yourself obliged to a man in whose shop you buy a piece of goods. He knows the landlord does not let him have his land for less than he can get from others, in the same manner as the shopkeeper sells his goods. No shopkeeper sells a yard of ribbon for sixpence when sevenpence is the current price." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, is it not better that tenants should be dependent on landlords?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, as there are many more tenants than landlords, perhaps, strictly speaking, we should wish not. But if you please you may let your lands cheap, and so get the value, part in money and part in homage. I should agree with you in that." BOSWELL: "So, Sir, you laugh at schemes of political improvement." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, most schemes of political improvement are very laughable things."

He observed, "Providence has wisely ordered that the more numerous men are, the more difficult it is for them to agree in anything, and so they are governed. There is no doubt, that if the poor should reason, 'We'll be the poor no longer, we'll make the rich take their turn,' they could easily do it, were it not that they can't agree. So the common soldiers, though so much more numerous than their officers, are governed by them for the same reason."

He said, "Mankind have a strong attachment to the habitations to which they have been accustomed. You see the inhabitants of Norway do not with one consent quit it, and go to some part of America, where there is a mild climate, and where they may have the same produce from land, with the tenth part of the labour. No, Sir; their affection for their old dwellings, and the terror of a general change, keep them at home. Thus, we see many of the finest spots in the world thinly inhabited, and many rugged spots well inhabited."

"The London Chronicle," which was the only newspaper he constantly took in, being brought, the office of reading it aloud was assigned to me. I was diverted by his impatience. He made me pass over so many parts of it that my task was very easy. He would not suffer one of the petitions to the king about the Middlesex election to be read.

I had hired a Bohemian as my servant while I remained in London, and being much pleased with him, I asked Dr. Johnson whether his being a Roman Catholic should prevent my taking him with me to Scotland. JOHNSON: "Why no, Sir. If *he* has no objection, you can have none." BOSWELL: "So, Sir, you are no great enemy to the

Roman Catholic religion." JOHNSON: "No more, Sir, than to the Presbyterian religion." BOSWELL: "You are joking." JOHNSON: "No, Sir, I really think so. Nay, Sir, of the two, I prefer the Popish." BOSWELL: "How so, Sir?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, the Presbyterians have no church, no apostolical ordination." BOSWELL: "And do you think that absolutely essential, Sir?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, as it was an apostolical institution, I think it is dangerous to be without it. And, Sir, the Presbyterians have no public worship: they have no form of prayer in which they know they are to join. They go to hear a man pray, and are to judge whether they will join with him." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, their doctrine is the same with that of the Church of England. Their confession of faith, and the thirty-nine articles, contain the same points, even the doctrine of predestination." JOHNSON: "Why yes, Sir; predestination was a part of the clamour of the times, so it is mentioned in our articles, but with as little positiveness as could be." BOSWELL: "Is it necessary, Sir, to believe all the thirty-nine articles?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, that is a question which has been much agitated. Some have thought it necessary that they should all be believed; others have considered them to be only articles of peace;<sup>1</sup> that is to say, you are not to preach against them." BOSWELL: "It appears to me, Sir, that predestination, or what is equivalent to it, cannot be avoided, if we hold an universal prescience in the Deity." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, does not GOD every day see things going on without preventing them." BOSWELL: "True, Sir; but if a thing be *certainly* foreseen, it must be fixed and cannot happen otherwise; and if we apply this consideration to the human mind, there is no free will, nor do I see how prayer can be of any avail." He mentioned Dr. Clarke and Bishop Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity, and bid me read "South's Sermons on Prayer;" but avoided the question which has excruciated philosophers and divines beyond any other. I did not press it further when I perceived that he was displeased, and shrunk from any abridgment of an attribute usually ascribed to the Divinity, however irreconcilable in its full extent with the grand system of moral government. His supposed orthodoxy here cramped the vigorous powers of his understanding. He was confined by a chain which early imagination and long habit made him think massy and strong, but which, had he ventured to try, he could at once have snapt asunder.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Simon Patrick (afterwards Bishop of Ely) thus expresses himself on this subject, in a letter to the learned Dr. John Mapletoft, dated Feb. 8, 1682-3:—

"I always took the ARTICLES to be only articles of communion; and so Bishop Bramhall expressly maintains against the Bishop of Chalcedon; and I remember well, that Bishop Sanderson, when the king was first restored, received the subscription of an acquaintance of mine, which he declared was not to them as articles of *faith*, but *peace*. I think you need make no scruple of the matter, because all that I know so understand the meaning of the subscription, and upon other terms would not subscribe."—The above was printed some years ago in the "The European Magazine," from the original, now in the hands of Mr. Mapletoft surgeon at Chertsey, grandson to Dr. John Mapletoft.—MALONE.

I proceeded: "What do you think, Sir, of purgatory, as believed by the Roman Catholics?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, it is a very harmless doctrine. They are of opinion that the generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to merit being admitted into the society of blessed spirits; and therefore that GOD is graciously pleased to allow of a middle state, where they may be purified by certain degrees of suffering. You see, Sir, there is nothing unreasonable in this." BOSWELL: "But then, Sir, their masses for the dead?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, if it be once established that there are souls in purgatory, it is as proper to pray for *them*, as for our brethren of mankind who are yet in this life." BOSWELL: "The idolatry of the Mass?" JOHNSON: "Sir, there is no idolatry in the Mass. They believe GOD to be there, and they adore him." BOSWELL: "The worship of Saints?" JOHNSON: "Sir, they do not worship Saints; they invoke them: they only ask their prayers. I am talking all this time of the *doctrines* of the Church of Rome. I grant you that, in *practice*, purgatory is made a lucrative imposition, and that the people do become idolatrous as they recommend themselves to the tutelary protection of particular saints. I think their giving the sacrament only in one kind is criminal, because it is contrary to the express institution of CHRIST, and I wonder how the Council of Trent admitted it." BOSWELL: "Confession?" JOHNSON: "Why, I don't know but that is a good thing. The Scripture says, 'Confess your faults one to another,' and the priests confess as well as the laity. Then it must be considered that their absolution is only upon repentance, and often upon penance also. You think your sins may be forgiven without penance, upon repentance alone."

I thus ventured to mention all the common objections against the Roman Catholic Church, that I might hear so great a man upon them. What he said is here accurately recorded. But it is not improbable that if one had taken the other side, he might have reasoned differently.

I must, however, mention, that he had a respect for "*the old religion*," as the mild Melancthon called that of the Roman Catholic Church, even while he was exerting himself for its reformation in some particulars. Sir William Scott informs me that he heard Johnson say, "A man who is converted from Protestantism to Popery may be sincere; he parts with nothing: he is only superadding to what he already had. But a convert from Popery to Protestantism gives up so much of what he has held as sacred as anything that he retains; there is so much *laceration of mind* in such a conversion, that it can hardly be sincere and lasting." The truth of this reflection may be confirmed by many and eminent instances, some of which will occur to most of my readers.

When we were alone, I introduced the subject of death, and endeavoured to maintain that the fear of it might be got over. I told him



that David Hume said to me, he was no more uneasy to think he should *not be* after his life, than that he *had not been* before he began to exist. JOHNSON : " Sir, if he really thinks so, his perceptions are disturbed ; he is mad. If he does not think so, he lies. He may tell you he holds his finger in the flame of a candle, without feeling pain ; would you believe him ? When he dies, he at least gives up all he has." BOSWELL : " Foote, Sir, told me, that when he was very ill he was not afraid to die." JOHNSON : " It is not true, Sir. Hold a pistol to Foote's breast, or to Hume's breast, and threaten to kill them, and you'll see how they behave." BOSWELL : " But may we not fortify our minds for the approach of death ?"—Here I am sensible I was in the wrong, to bring before his view what he ever looked upon with horror ; for although when in a celestial frame of mind in his " Vanity of Human Wishes," he has supposed death to be " kind Nature's signal for retreat," from this state of being to " a happier seat," his thoughts upon this awful change were in general full of dismal apprehensions. His mind resembled the vast amphitheatre, the Coliseum at Rome. In the centre stood his judgment, which, like a mighty gladiator, combated those apprehensions that, like the wild beasts of the *Arena*, were all around in cells, ready to be let out upon him. After a conflict, he drives them back into their dens ; but not killing them, they were still assailing him. To my question, whether we might not fortify our minds for the approach of death, he answered, in a passion, " No, Sir, let it alone. It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives. The act of dying is not of importance, it lasts so short a time." He added, (with an earnest look), " A man knows it must be so, and submits. It will do him no good to whine."

I attempted to continue the conversation. He was so provoked that he said : " Give us no more of this : " and was thrown into such a state of agitation that he expressed himself in a way that alarmed and distressed me ; showed an impatience that I should leave him, and when I was going away, called to me sternly, " Don't let us meet to-morrow."

I went home exceedingly uneasy. All the harsh observations which I had ever heard made upon his character crowded into my mind : and I seemed to myself like the man who had put his head into the lion's mouth a great many times with perfect safety, but at last had it bit off.

Next morning I sent him a note, stating that I might have been in the wrong, but it was not intentionally ; he was therefore, I could not help thinking, too severe upon me. That, notwithstanding our agreement not to meet that day, I would call on him in my way to the city, and stay five minutes by my watch. " You are," said I, " in my mind, since last night, surrounded with cloud and storm. Let me have a glimpse of sunshine, and go about my affairs in serenity and cheerfulness."

Upon entering his study, I was glad that he was not alone, which would have made our meeting more awkward. There were with him Mr. Steevens and Mr. Tyers, both of whom I now saw for the first

time. My note had, on his own reflection, softened him, for he received me very complacently; so that I unexpectedly found myself at ease, and joined in the conversation.

He said, the critics had done too much honour to Sir Richard Blackmore, by writing so much against him. That in his "Creation" he had been helped by various wits,—a line by Phillips, and a line by Tickell; so that by their aid, and that of others, the poem had been made out.<sup>1</sup>

I defended Blackmore's supposed lines, which have been ridiculed as absolute nonsense:

"A painted vest Prince Vortiger had on,  
Which from a naked Pict his grandsire won."<sup>2</sup>

I maintained it to be a poetical conceit. A Pict being painted, if he is slain in battle, and a vest is made of his skin, it is a painted vest won from him, though he was naked.

Johnson spoke unfavourably of a certain pretty voluminous author, saying, "He used to write anonymous books, and then other books commending those books, in which there was something of rascality."

I whispered him, "Well, Sir, you are now in good humour." JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir." I was going to leave him, and had got as far as the staircase. He stopped me, and smiling, said, "Get you gone *in*:" a curious mode of inviting me to stay, which I accordingly did for some time longer.

This little incidental quarrel and reconciliation, which, perhaps, I may be thought to have detailed too minutely, must be esteemed as one of many proofs which his friends had, that though he might be charged with *bad humour* at times, he was always a *good-natured* man; and I have heard Sir Joshua Reynolds, a nice and delicate observer of manners, particularly remark, that when upon any occasion Johnson

<sup>1</sup> Johnson himself has vindicated Blackmore upon this very point. See "The Lives of the Poets," vol. iii., p. 75, 8vo, 1791.—J. BOSWELL, JUN.

<sup>2</sup> An acute correspondent of "The European Magazine," April, 1792, has completely exposed a mistake which has been unaccountably frequent in ascribing these lines to Blackmore, notwithstanding that Sir Richard Steele, in that very popular work, "The Spectator," mentions them as written by the author of "The British Princes," the Hon. Edward Howard. The correspondent above mentioned, shows this mistake to be so inveterate, that not only I defended the lines as Blackmore's in the presence of Dr. Johnson, without any contradiction or doubt of their authenticity, but that the Reverend Mr. Whitaker has asserted in print, that he understands they were *suppressed* in the late edition or editions of Blackmore. "After all," says this intelligent writer, "it is not unworthy of particular observation, that these lines so often quoted do not exist either in Blackmore or Howard." In "The British Princes," 8vo, 1669, now before me, p. 96, they stand thus:

"A vest as admired Vortiger had on,  
Which from this Island's foes his grandsire won,  
Whose artful colour pass'd the Tyrian dye,  
Obliged to triumph in this legacy"

It is probable, I think, that some wag, in order to make Howard still more ridiculous than he really was, formed the couplet as it now circulates.—BOSWELL.

had been rough to any person in company, he took the first opportunity of reconciliation, by drinking to him, or addressing his discourse to him; but if he found his dignified indirect overtures sullenly neglected, he was quite indifferent, and considered himself as having done all that he ought to do, and the other as now in the wrong.

Being to set out for Scotland on the 10th of November, I wrote to him at Streatham, begging that he would meet me in town on the 9th: but if this should be very inconvenient to him, I would go thither. His answer was as follows:—

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

Nov. 9, 1769.

“ Upon balancing the inconveniences of both parties, I find it will less incommode you to spend your night here, than me to come to town. I wish to see you, and am ordered by the lady of this house to invite you hither. Whether you can come or not, I shall not have any occasion of writing to you again before your marriage, and therefore tell you now, that with great sincerity I wish you happiness.

“ I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

I was detained in town till it was too late on the 9th, so went to him early in the morning of the 10th of November. “ Now,” said he, “ that you are going to marry, do not expect more from life than life will afford. You may often find yourself out of humour, and you may often think your wife not studious enough to please you; and yet you may have reason to consider yourself as upon the whole very happily married.”

Talking of marriage in general, he observed, “ Our marriage service is too refined. It is calculated only for the best kind of marriages; whereas, we should have a form for matches of convenience, of which there are many.” He agreed with me that there was no absolute necessity for having the marriage ceremony performed by a regular clergyman, for this was not commanded in scripture.

I was volatile enough to repeat to him a little epigrammatic song of mine, on matrimony, which Mr. Garriek had a few days before procured to be set to music by the very ingenious Mr. Dibdin.

“ A MATRIMONIAL THOUGHT.

“ In the blythe days of honeymoon,  
With Kate's allurements smitten,  
I loved her late, I loved her soon,  
And call'd her dearest kitten.

“ But now my kitten's grown a cat,  
And cross like other wives,  
Oh! by my soul, my honest Mat,  
I fear she has nine lives.”

My illustrious friend said, "It is very well, Sir ; but you should not swear." Upon which I altered "Oh! by my soul," to "Alas, alas!"

He was so good as to accompany me to London, and see me into the post-chaise which was to carry me on my road to Scotland. And sure I am, that however inconsiderable many of the particulars recorded at this time may appear to some, they will be esteemed by the best part of my readers as genuine traits of his character, contributing together to give a full, fair, and distinct view of it.



MR. WILLIAM STRAHAN, THE KING'S PRINTER.

#### CHAPTER IV.—1770—1771.

JOHNSON PUBLISHES "THE FALSE ALARM"—LETTERS TO THE WARTONS, &c.—DR. MAXWELL'S COLLECTANEA—JOHNSON'S POLITICAL OPINIONS—HIS GENERAL MODE OF LIFE—LOVE OF BLACK-LETTER BOOKS—BURTON'S "ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY"—JACOB BEHMEN—DR. PRIESTLEY—FRENCH NOVELS—PÈRE BOSCOVITCH—OSSIAN—THE POETICAL COBBLER—MARRIAGE—FOPPERY—THE POOR OF ENGLAND—THE CORN LAWS—MR. BURKE—FORTUNE HUNTERS—IRISH CLERGY—JOHNSON PUBLISHES "PAMPHLET ON THE FALKLAND ISLANDS"—MR. STRAHAN'S EFFORT TO BRING JOHNSON INTO PARLIAMENT—BOSWELL'S MARRIAGE—JOHNSON VISITS LICHFIELD AND ASHBOURNE.

IN 1770, he published a political pamphlet, entitled "The False Alarm," intended to justify the conduct of the ministry and their majority in the House of Commons, for having virtually assumed it as an axiom, that the expulsion of a member of parliament was equivalent to exclusion, and thus having declared Colonel Luttrell to be duly elected for the county of Middlesex, notwithstanding Mr. Wilkes had a great majority of votes. This being justly considered as a gross violation of the right of election, an alarm for the constitution extended itself all over the kingdom. To prove this alarm to be false was the purpose of Johnson's pamphlet; but even his vast powers are inadequate to cope with constitutional truth and reason, and his argument failed of effect; and the House of Commons have since expunged the offensive resolution from their Journals. That the House of Commons might have expelled Mr. Wilkes repeatedly, and as often as he should be re-chosen, was not denied

but incapacitation cannot be but by an act of the whole legislature. It was wonderful to see how a prejudice in favour of government in general, and an aversion to popular clamour, could blind and contract such an understanding as Johnson's, in this particular case; yet the wit, the sarcasm, the eloquent vivacity which this pamphlet displayed, made it be read with great avidity at the time, and it will ever be read with pleasure, for the sake of its composition. That it endeavoured to infuse a narcotic indifference, as to public concerns, into the minds of the people, and that it broke out sometimes into an extreme coarseness of contemptuous abuse, is but too evident.

It must not, however, be omitted, that when the storm of his violence subsides, he takes a fair opportunity to pay a grateful compliment to the king, who had rewarded his merit :

“These low-born railers have endeavoured, surely without effect, to alienate the affections of the people from the only king who, for almost a century, has much appeared to desire, or much endeavoured to deserve them.” And, “Every honest man must lament, that the faction has been regarded with frigid neutrality by the Tories, who, being long accustomed to signalise their principles by opposition to the court, do not yet consider, that they have at last a king who knows not the name of party, and who wishes to be the common father of all his people.”

To this pamphlet, which was at once discovered to be Johnson's, several answers came out, in which care was taken to remind the public of his former attacks upon government, and of his now being a pensioner, without allowing for the honourable terms upon which Johnson's pension was granted and accepted, or the change of system which the British court had undergone upon the accession of his present Majesty. He was, however, soothed in the highest strain of panegyric, in a poem called “The Remonstrance,” by the Reverend Mr. Stockdale, to whom he was, upon many occasions, a kind protector.

The following admirable minute made by him, describe so well his own state and that of numbers to whom self-examination is habitual, that I cannot omit it :—

“June 1, 1770. Every man naturally persuades himself that he can keep his resolutions, nor is he convinced of his imbecility but by length of time and frequency of experiment. This opinion of our own constancy is so prevalent, that we always despise him who suffers his general and settled purpose to be overpowered by an occasional desire. They, therefore, when frequent failures have made desperate, cease to form resolutions; and they who are become cunning, do not tell them. Those who do not make them are very few, but of their effect little is perceived; for scarcely any man persists in a course of life planned by choice, but as he is restrained from deviation by some external power. He who may live as he will, seldom lives long in the observation of his own rules.”<sup>1</sup>

Of this year I have obtained the following letters :—

“ TO THE REVEREND DR. FARMER, CAMBRIDGE.

“ SIR, *Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, March 21, 1770.*

“ As no man ought to keep wholly to himself any possession that may be useful to the public, I hope you will not think me unreasonably intrusive, if I have recourse to you for such information as you are more able to give me than any other man.

“ In support of an opinion which you have already placed above the need of any more support, Mr. Steevens, a very ingenious gentleman, lately of King's College, has collected an account of all the translations which Shakspeare might have seen and used. He wishes his catalogue to be perfect; and, therefore, entreats that you will favour him by the insertion of such additions as the accuracy of your inquiries has enabled you to make. To this request I take the liberty of adding my own solicitation.

“ We have no immediate use for this catalogue; and, therefore, do not desire that it should interrupt or hinder your more important employments. But it will be kind to let us know that you receive it. I am, Sir, &c.,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ TO THE REVEREND MR. THOMAS WARTON.

“ DEAR SIR, *London, June 23, 1770.*

“ The readiness with which you were pleased to promise me some notes on Shakspeare, was a new instance of your friendship. I shall not hurry you; but am desired by Mr. Steevens, who helps me in this edition, to let you know that we shall print the tragedies first, and shall, therefore, want first the notes which belong to them. We think not to incommode the readers with a supplement; and, therefore, what we cannot put into its proper place will do us no good. We shall not begin to print before the end of six weeks, perhaps not so soon.

I am, &c.,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ TO THE REV. DR. JOSEPH WARTON.

“ DEAR SIR, *Sept. 27, 1770.*

“ I am revising my edition of Shakspeare, and remember that I formerly misrepresented your opinion of Lear. Be pleased to write the paragraph as you would have it, and send it. If you have any remarks of your own upon that or any other play, I shall gladly receive them.

“ Make my compliments to Mrs. Warton. I sometimes think of wandering for a few days to Winchester, but am apt to delay. I am, Sir,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ TO MR. FRANCIS BARBER, AT MRS. CLAPP'S, BISHOP-STORTFORD,  
HERTFORDSHIRE.

“ DEAR FRANCIS, *London, Sept. 25, 1770.*

“ I am at last sat down to write to you, and should very much blame myself for having neglected you so long, if I did not impute that and many other failings to want of health. I hope not to be so long silent again. I am very well satisfied with your progress, if you can really perform the exercises

which you are set ; and I hope Mr. Ellis does not suffer you to impose on him or on yourself.

“Make my compliments to Mr. Ellis, and to Mrs. Clapp, and Mr. Smith.

“Let me know what English books you read for your entertainment. You can never be wise unless you love reading.

“Do not imagine that I shall forget or forsake you ; for if, when I examine you, I find that you have not lost your time, you shall want no encouragement from

Yours affectionately,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

TO THE SAME.

“DEAR FRANCIS,

December 7, 1770.

“I hope you mind your business. I design you shall stay with Mrs. Clapp these holidays. If you are invited out you may go, if Mr. Ellis gives leave. I have ordered you some clothes, which you will receive, I believe, next week. My compliments to Mrs. Clapp, and to Mr. Ellis, and Mr. Smith, &c. I am, your affectionate,

SAM. JOHNSON.”

During this year there was a total cessation of all correspondence between Dr. Johnson and me, without any coldness on either side, but merely from procrastination, continued from day to day ; and as I was not in London, I had no opportunity of enjoying his company and recording his conversation. To supply this blank, I shall present my readers with some *Collectanea*, obligingly furnished to me by the Rev. Dr. Maxwell, of Falkland, in Ireland, some time assistant preacher at the Temple, and for many years the social friend of Johnson, who spoke of him with a very kind regard.

#### “COLLECTANEA.

“My acquaintance with that great and venerable character commenced in the year 1754. I was introduced to him by Mr. Grierson,<sup>1</sup> his Majesty's printer, at Dublin,—a gentleman of uncommon learning, and great wit and vivacity. Mr. Grierson died in Germany, at the age of twenty-seven. Dr. Johnson highly respected his abilities, and often observed, that he possessed more extensive knowledge than any man of his years he had ever known. His industry was equal to his talents ; and he particularly excelled in every species of philological learning, and was, perhaps, the best critic of the age he lived in.

“I must always remember with gratitude my obligation to Mr. Grierson, for the honour and happiness of Dr. Johnson's acquaintance and friendship, which continued uninterrupted and undiminished to his death : a connection, that was at once the pride and happiness of my life.

“What pity it is, that so much wit and good sense as he continually exhibited in conversation, should perish unrecorded ! Few persons quitted

<sup>1</sup> Son of the learned Mrs. Grierson, who was patronised by the late Lord Granville, and was the editor of several of the classics.—BOSWELL.

Her edition of Tacitus, with the notes of Rychius, in three volumes 8vo, 1730, was dedicated, in every elegant Latin, to John, Lord Carteret (afterwards Earl Granville), by whom she was patronised during his residence in Ireland as Lord Lieutenant between 1721 and 1730.—MALONE.



his company without perceiving themselves wiser and better than they were before. On serious subjects he flashed the most interesting conviction upon his auditors: and upon lighter topics, you might have supposed—*Albano musas de monte locutas*.

“Though I can hope to add but little to the celebrity of so exalted a character, by any communications I can furnish, yet out of pure respect to his memory, I will venture to transmit to you some anecdotes concerning him, which fell under my own observation. The very *minutiæ* of such a character must be interesting, and may be compared to the filings of diamonds.

“In politics he was deemed a Tory, but certainly was not so in the obnoxious or party sense of the term; for while he asserted the legal and salutary prerogatives of the crown, he no less respected the constitutional liberties of the people. Whiggism, at the time of the Revolution, he said, was accompanied with certain principles; but latterly, as a mere party distinction under Walpole and the Pelhams, was no better than the politics of stock-jobbers, and the religion of infidels.

“He detested the idea of governing by parliamentary corruption, and asserted most strenuously, that a prince steadily and conspicuously pursuing the interests of his people, could not fail of parliamentary concurrence. A prince of ability, he contended, might and should be the directing soul and spirit of his own administration; in short, his own minister, and not the mere head of a party; and then, and not till then, would the royal dignity be sincerely respected.

“Johnson seemed to think that a certain degree of crown influence over the Houses of Parliament (not meaning a corrupt and shameful dependence), was very salutary, nay, even necessary, in our mixed government. ‘For,’ said he, ‘if the members were under no crown influence, and disqualified from receiving any gratification from court, and resembled, as they possibly might, Pym and Haslerig, and other stubborn and sturdy members of the Long Parliament, the wheels of government would be totally obstructed. Such men would oppose, merely to show their power, from envy, jealousy, and perversity of disposition; and not gaining themselves, would hate and oppose all who did; not loving the person of the prince, and conceiving they owed him little gratitude, from the mere spirit of insolence and contradiction, they would oppose and thwart him upon all occasions.’

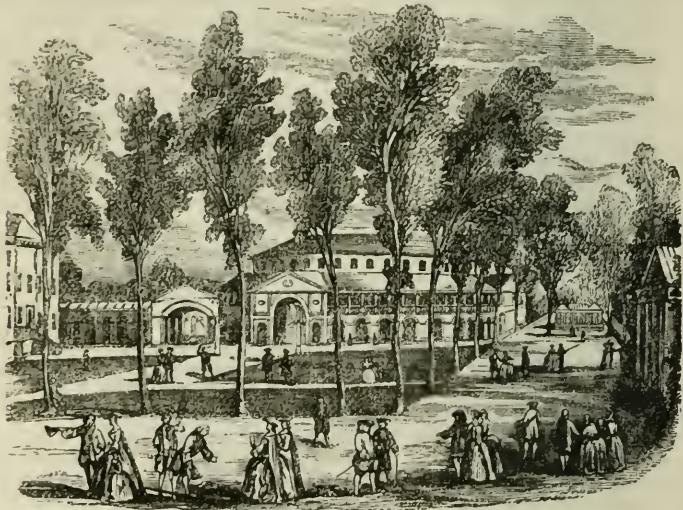
“The inseparable imperfection annexed to all human governments, consisted, he said, in not being able to create a sufficient fund of virtue and principle to carry the laws into due and effectual execution. Wisdom might plan, but virtue alone could execute. And where could sufficient virtue be found? A variety of delegated, and often discretionary, powers must be entrusted somewhere: which, if not governed by integrity and conscience, would necessarily be abused, till at last the constable would sell his for a shilling.

“This excellent person was sometimes charged with abetting slavish and arbitrary principles of government. Nothing in my opinion could be a grosser calumny and misrepresentation; for how can it be rationally supposed that he should adopt such pernicious and absurd opinions, who supported his philosophical character with so much dignity, was extremely jealous of his personal

liberty and independence,' and could not brook the smallest appearance of neglect or insult, even from the highest personages?

"But let us view him in some instances of more familiar life.

"His general mode of life, during my acquaintance, seemed to be pretty uniform. About twelve o'clock I commonly visited him, and frequently found him in bed, or declaiming over his tea, which he drank very plentifully. He generally had a levee of morning visitors, chiefly men of letters; Hawkesworth, Goldsmith, Murphy, Langton, Steevens, Beauclerk, &c. &c., and sometimes learned ladies; particularly I remember a French lady of wit and fashion doing him the honour of a visit. He seemed to me to be considered as a kind of public oracle, whom everybody thought they had a right to visit and consult; and, doubtless, they were well rewarded. I never could discover how



RANELAGH.

he found time for his compositions. He declaimed all the morning, then went to dinner at a tavern, where he commonly stayed late, and then drank his tea at some friend's house, over which he loitered a great while, but seldom took supper. I fancy he must have read and wrote chiefly in the night, for I can scarcely recollect that he ever refused going with me to a tavern, and he often went to Ranelagh,<sup>2</sup> which he deemed a place of innocent recreation.

<sup>1</sup> On the necessity of crown influence; see Boucher's "Sermons on the American Revolution," p. 218; and Paley's "Moral Philosophy," b. vi., c. vii., p. 491, 4to., there quoted.—BLAKEWAY.

<sup>2</sup> Ranelagh, a celebrated place of fashionable resort, somewhat similar to Vauxhall-gardens, was situate between Pimlico and Chelsea. It was so named from its occupying the site of Viscount Ranelagh's villa. At the present day not a vestige remains of it, although its memory is preserved by naming after it the streets, roads, and places which have been built upon its grounds.—ED.

"He frequently gave all the silver in his pocket to the poor, who watched him, between his house and the tavern where he dined. He walked the streets at all hours, and said he was never robbed, for the rogues knew he had little money, nor had the appearance of having much.

"Though the most accessible and communicative man alive, yet when he suspected he was invited to be exhibited, he constantly spurned the invitation.

"Two young women from Staffordshire visited him when I was present, to consult him on the subject of Methodism, to which they were inclined. 'Come,' said he, 'you pretty fools, dine with Maxwell and me at the Mitre, and we will talk over that subject;' which they did, and after dinner he took one of them upon his knee, and fondled her for half an hour together.

"Upon a visit to me at a country lodging near Twickenham, he asked what sort of society I had there. I told him but indifferent; as they chiefly consisted of opulent traders, retired from business. He said he never much liked that class of people; 'For, Sir,' said he, 'they have lost the civility of tradesmen, without acquiring the manners of gentlemen.'

"Johnson was much attached to London;<sup>1</sup> he observed, that a man stored his mind better there than anywhere else; and that in remote situations a man's body might be feasted, but his mind was starved, and his faculties apt to degenerate, from want of exercise and competition. No place, he said, cured a man's vanity or arrogance so well as London; for as no man was either great or good *per se*, but as compared with others not so good or great, he was sure to find in the metropolis many his equals, and some his superiors. He observed that a man in London was in less danger of falling in love indiscreetly than anywhere else; for there the difficulty of deciding between the conflicting pretensions of a vast variety of objects, kept him safe. He told me that he had frequently been offered country preferment, if he would consent to take orders; but he could not leave the improved society of the capital, or consent to exchange the exhilarating joys and splendid decorations of public life, for the obscurity, insipidity, and uniformity of remote situations.

"Speaking of Mr. Harte, Canon of Windsor, and writer of 'The History of Gustavus Adolphus,' he much commended him as a scholar, and a man of the most companionable talents he had ever known. He said the defects in his history proceeded not from imbecility, but from foppery.

"He loved, he said, the old black-letter books; they were rich in matter, though their style was inelegant; wonderfully so, considering how conversant the writers were with the best models of antiquity.

"Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' he said, was the only book that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise.

"He frequently exhorted me to set about writing a History of Ireland, and archly remarked, there had been some good Irish writers, and that one Irishman might at least aspire to be equal to another. He had great compassion for the miseries and distresses of the Irish nation, particularly the

<sup>1</sup> Montaigne had the same affection for Paris which Johnson had for London. "Je l'aime tendrement," says he in his Essay on Vanity, "jusqu' à ses verrues et à ses taches. Je ne suis François que par cette grande eité, grande en peuples, grande en félicité de son assiette, mais sur tout grande et incomparable en variété et diversité des commoditez: la gloire de la France, et l'un des plus nobles ornemens du monde." Vol. iii., p. 321 edit Amsterdam, 1781.—BLAKEWAY.

Papists; and severely reprobated the barbarous debilitating policy of the British government, which, he said, was the most detestable mode of persecution. To a gentleman, who hinted such policy might be necessary to support the authority of the English government, he replied by saying, 'Let the authority of the English government perish, rather than be maintained by iniquity. Better would it be to restrain the turbulence of the natives by the authority of the sword, and to make them amenable to law and justice by an effectual and vigorous police, than to grind them to powder by all manner of disabilities and incapacities. Better,' said he, 'to hang or drown people at once, than, by an unrelenting persecution, to beggar and starve them.' The moderation and humanity of the present times have, in some measure, justified the wisdom of his observations.

"Dr. Johnson was often accused of prejudices, nay, antipathy, with regard to the natives of Scotland. Surely, so illiberal a prejudice never entered his mind: and, it is well known, many natives of that respectable country possessed a large share in his esteem; nor were any of them ever excluded from his good offices as far as opportunity permitted. True it is, he considered the Scotch, nationally, as a crafty, designing people, eagerly attentive to their own interest, and too apt to overlook the claims and pretensions of other people. 'While they confine their benevolence, in a manner, exclusively to those of their own country, they expect to share in the good offices of other people. Now,' said Johnson, 'this principle is either right or wrong; if right, we should do well to imitate such conduct; if wrong, we cannot too much detest it.'

"Being solicited to compose a funeral sermon for the daughter of a tradesman, he naturally inquired into the character of the deceased; and being told she was remarkable for her humility and condescension to inferiors, he observed that those were very laudable qualities, but it might not be so easy to discover who the lady's inferiors were.

"Of a certain player he remarked, that his conversation usually threatened and announced more than it performed; that he fed you with a continual renovation of hope, to end in a constant succession of disappointment.

"When exasperated by contradiction, he was apt to treat his opponents with too much acrimony: as, 'Sir, you don't see your way through that question. Sir, you talk the language of ignorance.' On my observing to him that a certain gentleman had remained silent the whole evening, in the midst of a very brilliant and learned society, 'Sir,' said he, 'the conversation overflowed and drowned him.'

"His philosophy, though austere and solemn, was by no means morose and cynical, and never blunted the laudable sensibilities of his character, or exempted him from the influence of the tender passions. Want of tenderness, he always alleged, was want of parts, and was no less a proof of stupidity than depravity.

"Speaking of Mr. Hanway,<sup>1</sup> who published 'An Eight Days' Journey from

<sup>1</sup> Jonas Hanway, a wealthy Russian merchant and eminent philanthropist, born at Portsmouth, 1712, was the chief founder of the Marine Society and the Magdalen Hospital. He wrote several religious works, the principal of which is entitled "Domestic Happiness Promoted." He died in 1786, and a monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.—*Ed.*

London to Portsmouth,' 'Jonas,' said he, 'acquired some reputation by travelling abroad, but lost it all by travelling at home.'

"Of the passion of love he remarked, that its violence and ill effects were much exaggerated; for who knows any real sufferings on that head, more than from the exorbitancy of any other passion?"

"He much commended 'Law's Serious Call,' which he said was the finest piece of hortatory theology in any language. 'Law,' said he, 'fell latterly into the reveries of Jacob Behmen,<sup>1</sup> whom Law alleged to have been somewhat in the same state with St. Paul, and to have seen *unutterable things*. Were it even so,' said Johnson, 'Jacob would have resembled St. Paul still more, by not attempting to utter them.'

"He observed, that the established clergy in general did not preach plain enough; and that polished periods and glittering sentences flew over the heads of the common people, without any impression upon their hearts. Something might be necessary, he observed, to excite the affections of the common people, who were sunk in languor and lethargy, and therefore he supposed that the new concomitants of methodism might probably produce so desirable an effect. The mind, like the body, he observed, delighted in change and novelty, and even in religion itself, courted new appearances and modifications. Whatever might be thought of some methodist teachers, he said, he could scarcely doubt the sincerity of that man, who travelled nine hundred miles in a month, and preached twelve times a week; for no adequate reward, merely temporal, could be given for such indefatigable labour.

"Of Dr. Priestley's theological works, he remarked, that they tended to unsettle everything, and yet settled nothing.

"He was much affected by the death of his mother, and wrote to me to come and assist him to compose his mind, which indeed I found extremely agitated. He lamented that all serious and religious conversation was banished from the society of men, and yet great advantages might be derived from it. All acknowledged, he said, what hardly any body practised, the obligations we were under of making the concerns of eternity the governing principles of our lives. Every man, he observed, at last wishes for retreat: he sees his expectations frustrated in the world, and begins to wean himself from it, and to prepare for everlasting separation.

"He observed, that the influence of London now extended everywhere, and that from all manner of communication being opened, there shortly would be no remains of the ancient simplicity, or places of cheap retreat to be found.

"He was no admirer of blank verse, and said it always failed, unless sustained by the dignity of the subject. In blank verse, he said, the language suffered more distortion, to keep it out of prose, than any inconvenience or limitation to be apprehended from the shackles and circumspection of rhyme.

"He reproved me once for saying grace without mentioning the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and hoped in future I would be more mindful of the apostolical injunction.

"He refused to go out of a room before me at Mr. Langton's house, saying, he hoped he knew his rank better than to presume to take place of a Doctor

<sup>1</sup> Jacob Behmen, or Böhmen, a German shoemaker and theological writer. He was the founder of a sect, sometimes called Behmenites, and sometimes Aureacrucians.—Ed.

in Divinity. I mention such little anecdotes, merely to show the peculiar turn and habit of his mind.

“He used frequently to observe, that there was more to be endured than enjoyed, in the general condition of human life; and frequently quoted those lines of Dryden:

“Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,  
Yet all hope pleasure from what still remain.”

For his part, he said, he never passed that week in his life which he would wish to repeat, were an angel to make the proposal to him.

“He was of opinion, that the English nation cultivated both their soil and their reason better than any other people; but admitted that the French, though not the highest, perhaps, in any department of literature, yet in every department were very high. Intellectual pre-eminence, he observed, was the highest superiority; and that every nation derived their highest reputation from the splendour and dignity of their writers. Voltaire, he said, was a good narrator, and that his principal merit consisted in a happy selection and arrangement of circumstances.

“Speaking of the French novels, compared with Richardson’s, he said, they might be pretty baubles, but a wren was not an eagle.

“In a Latin conversation with the Père Boscovitch,<sup>1</sup> at the house of Mrs. Cholmondeley, I heard him maintain the superiority of Sir Isaac Newton over all foreign philosophers,<sup>2</sup> with a dignity and eloquence that surprised that learned foreigner. It being observed to him, that a rage for everything English prevailed much in France after Lord Chatham’s glorious war, he said, he did not wonder at it, for that we had drubbed those fellows into a proper reverence for us, and that their national petulance required periodical chastisement.

“Lord Lyttelton’s Dialogues, he deemed a nugatory performance. ‘That man,’ said he, ‘sat down to write a book, to tell the world what the world had all his life been telling him.’

“Somebody observing that the Scotch Highlanders, in the year 1745, had made surprising efforts, considering their numerous wants and disadvantages: ‘Yes, Sir,’ said he, ‘their wants were numerous; but you have not mentioned the greatest of them all—the want of law.’

“Speaking of the *inward light*, to which some methodists pretended, he said, it was a principle utterly incompatible with social or civil security. ‘If a man,’ said he, ‘pretends to a principle of action of which I can know nothing, nay, not so much as that he has it, but only that he pretends to it; how can I tell what that person may be prompted to do? When a person professes to be governed by a written ascertained law, I can then know where to find him.’

“The poem of Fingal, he said, was a mere unconnected rhapsody, a tiresome

<sup>1</sup> Roger Joseph Boscovitch, a professor of mathematics in the Jesuits’ College at Rome, was author of a Latin poem on Eclipses, &c. He died in 1757.—ED.

In a Discourse by Sir William Jones, addressed to the Asiatic Society, Feb. 24, 1783, is the following passage:—

One of the most sagacious men of this age who continues, I hope, to improve and adorn Samuel Johnson, remarked in my hearing, that if Newton had flourished in ancient Greece he would have been worshipped as a Divinity.”—MALONE.

repetition of the same images. 'In vain shall we look for the *lucidus ordo*, where there is neither end nor object, design or moral, *nec certa recurrit imago*.'

"Being asked by a young nobleman, what was become of the gallantry and military spirit of the old English nobility, he replied, 'Why, my lord, I'll tell you what is become of it: it is gone into the city to look for a fortune.'

"Speaking of a dull, tiresome fellow, whom he chanced to meet, he said, 'That fellow seems to me to possess but one idea, and that is a wrong one.'

"Much inquiry having been made concerning a gentleman, who had quitted a company where Johnson was, and no information being obtained, at last Johnson observed, that 'he did not care to speak ill of any man behind his back, but he believed the gentleman was an *attorney*.'

"He spoke with much contempt of the notice taken of Woodhouse, the poetical shoemaker. He said, it was all vanity and childishness: and that such objects were, to those who patronised them, mere mirrors of their own superiority. 'They had better,' said he, 'furnish the man with good implements for his trade, than raise subscriptions for his poems. He may make an excellent shoemaker, but can never make a good poet. A schoolboy's exercise may be a pretty thing for a schoolboy; but it is no treat for a man.'

"Speaking of Boetius, who was the favourite writer of the middle ages, he said, it was very surprising that, upon such a subject, and in such a situation, he should be *magis philosophus quam Christianus*.

"Speaking of Arthur Murphy, whom he very much loved, 'I don't know,' said he, 'that Arthur can be classed with the very first dramatic writers; yet at present I doubt much whether we have anything superior to Arthur.'

"Speaking of the national debt, he said, 'it was an idle dream to suppose that the country could sink under it. Let the public creditors be ever so clamorous, the interest of millions must ever prevail over that of thousands.'

"Of Dr. Kennicott's Collations, he observed, that 'though the text should not be much mended thereby, yet it was no small advantage to know that we had as good a text as the most consummate industry and diligence could procure.'

"Johnson observed, 'that so many objections might be made to everything, that nothing could overcome them but the necessity of doing something. No man would be of any profession, as simply opposed to not being of it; but every one must do something.'

"He remarked, that a London parish was a very comfortless thing; for the clergyman seldom knew the face of one out of ten of his parishioners.

"Of the late Mr. Mallet he spoke with no great respect: said, he was ready for any dirty job; that he had wrote against Byng at the instigation of the ministry, and was equally ready to write for him, provided he found his account in it.

"A gentleman who had been very unhappy in marriage, married immediately after his wife died: Johnson said, it was the triumph of hope over experience.

"He observed, that a man of sense and education should meet a suitable companion in a wife. It was a miserable thing when the conversation could only be such as, whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted, and probably a dispute about that.

"He did not approve of late marriages, observing, that more was lost in

point of time, than compensated for by any possible advantages. Even ill assorted marriages were preferable to cheerless celibacy.

"Of Old Sheridan he remarked, that he neither wanted parts nor literature; but that his vanity and Quixotism obscured his merits.

"He said, foppery was never cured; it was the bad stanina of the mind, which, like those of the body, were never rectified: once a coxcomb, and always a coxcomb.

"Being told that Gilbert Cooper called him the Caliban of literature, 'Well,' said he, 'I must dub him the Punchinello.'

"Speaking of the old Earl of Cork and Orrery, he said, 'That man spent his life in catching at an object, (literary eminence,) which he had not power to grasp.'

"To find a substitution for violated morality, he said, was the leading feature in all perversions of religion.

"He often used to quote, with great pathos, those fine lines of Virgil:—

*'Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi  
Prima fugit; subeunt morbi, tristisque senectus.  
Et labor, et duræ rapit inclementia mortis.'*

"Speaking of Homer, whom he venerated as the prince of poets, Johnson remarked, that the advice given to Diomed<sup>1</sup> by his father, when he sent him to the Trojan war, was the noblest exhortation that could be instanced in any heathen writer, and comprised in a single line:—

*Αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν, καὶ ὑπέροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλωι :*

which, if I recollect well, is translated by Dr. Clarke thus: *Semper appetere præstantissima, et omnibus aliis antecellere.*

"He observed, 'it was a most mortifying reflection for any man to consider what he had done, compared with what he might have done.'

"He said few people had intellectual resources sufficient to forego the pleasures of wine. They could not otherwise contrive how to fill the interval between dinner and supper.

"He went with me, one Sunday, to hear my old master, Gregory Sharpe, preach at the Temple.—In the prefatory prayer, Sharpe ranted about *liberty*, as a blessing most fervently to be implored, and its continuance prayed for. Johnson observed, that our *liberty* was in no sort of danger:—he would have done much better to pray against our *licentiousness*.

"One evening at Mrs. Montagu's, where a splendid company was assembled, consisting of the most eminent literary characters, I thought he seemed highly pleased with the respect and attention that were shown him, and asked him, on our return home, if he was not highly *gratified* by his visit: 'No, Sir,' said he, 'not highly *gratified*; yet I do not recollect to have passed many evenings *with fewer objections*.'

"Though of no high extraction himself, he had much respect for birth and family, especially among ladies. He said, 'adventitious accomplishments may be possessed by all ranks; but one may easily distinguish the *born gentlewoman*.'

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Maxwell's memory has deceived him. Glaucus is the person who received this counsel; and Clarke's translation of the passage (II, lib. x., l. 208) is as follows:—

"Ut semper fortissime rem gererem, et superior virtute essem aliis."—J. BOSWELL, JUN.



“ He said, ‘ the poor in England were better provided for than in any other country of the same extent : he did not mean little cantons or petty republics ; where a great proportion of the people,’ said he, ‘ are suffered to languish in helpless misery tha country must be ill policed, and wretchedly governed : a decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilisation. Gentlemen of education,’ he observed, ‘ were pretty much the same in all countries : the condition of the lower orders, the poor especially, was the true mark of national discrimination.’

“ When the corn-laws were in agitation in Ireland, by which that country has been enabled not only to feed itself, but to export corn to a large amount, Sir Thomas Robinson observed, that those laws might be prejudicial to the corn-trade of England. ‘ Sir Thomas,’ said he, ‘ you talk the language of a savage : what, Sir, would you prevent any people from feeding themselves, if by any honest means they can do it?’

“ It being mentioned that Garrick assisted Dr. Browne, the author of ‘ The Estimate,’ in some dramatic composition, ‘ No, Sir,’ said Johnson, ‘ he would no more suffer Garrick to write a line in his play, than he would suffer him to mount his pulpit.’

“ Speaking of Burke, he said, ‘ It was commonly observed he spoke too often in parliament ; but nobody could say he did not speak well, though too frequently and too familiarly.’

“ Speaking of economy, he remarked, it was hardly worth while to save anxiously twenty pounds a year. If a man could save to that degree, so as to enable him to assume a different rank in society, then, indeed, it might answer some purpose.

“ He observed, a principal source of erroneous judgment was, viewing things partially and only on *one side* : as, for instance, *fortune hunters*, when they contemplated the fortunes *singly* and *separately*, it was a dazzling and tempting object ; but when they came to possess the wives and their fortunes *together*, they began to suspect they had not made quite so good a bargain.

“ Speaking of the late Duke of Northumberland living very magnificently when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, somebody remarked, it would be difficult to find a suitable successor to him : ‘ Then,’ exclaimed Johnson, ‘ *he is only fit to succeed himself.*’

“ He advised me, if possible, to have a good orchard. He knew, he said, a clergyman of small income, who brought up a family very reputably, which he chiefly fed with apple dumplings.

“ He said, he had known several good scholars among the Irish gentlemen ; but scarcely any of them correct in *quality*. He extended the same observation to Scotland.

“ Speaking of a certain prelate, who exerted himself very laudably in building churches and parsonage-houses ; ‘ however,’ said he, ‘ I do not find that he is esteemed a man of much professional learning, or a liberal patron of it ; yet, it is well, where a man possesses any strong positive excellence. Few have all kinds of merit belonging to their character. We must not examine matters too deeply. No, Sir, *a fallible being will fail somewhere.*’

“ Talking of the Irish clergy, he said, ‘ Swift was a man of great parts, and the instrument of much good to his country. Berkeley was a profound scholar,

as well as a man of fine imagination: but Usher,' he said, 'was the great luminary of the Irish church: and a greater,' he added, 'no church could boast of, at least in modern times.'

"We dined *tête-à-tête* at the Mitre, as I was preparing to return to Ireland, after an absence of many years. I regretted much leaving London, where I had formed many agreeable connections: 'Sir,' said he, 'I don't wonder at it; no man, fond of letters, leaves London without regret. But remember, Sir, you have seen and enjoyed a great deal; you have seen life in its highest decorations, and the world has nothing new to exhibit. No man is so well qualified to leave public life as he who has long tried it and known it well. We are always hankering after untried situations, and imagining greater felicity from them than they can afford. No, Sir, knowledge and virtue may be acquired in all countries, and your local consequence will make you some amends for the intellectual gratifications you relinquish.' Then he quoted the following lines with great pathos:—

"He who has early known the pomps of state,  
(For things unknown 'tis ignorance to condemn);  
And, after having view'd the gaudy bait,  
Can boldly say, the trifle I contemn;  
With such a one contented could I live,  
Contented could I die."<sup>1</sup>

"He then took a most affectionate leave of me; said, he knew it was a point of *duty* that called me away. 'We shall all be sorry to lose you,' said he: '*laudo tamen.*'"

In 1771 he published another political pamphlet, entitled "Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands," in which, upon materials furnished to him by ministry, and upon general topics, expanded in his rich style, he successfully endeavoured to persuade the nation that it was wise and laudable to suffer the question of right to remain undecided, rather than involve our country in another war. It has been suggested by some, with what truth I shall not take upon me to decide, that he rated the consequence of those islands to Great Britain too low. But however this may be, every humane mind must

<sup>1</sup> Being desirous to trace these verses to the fountain-head, after having in vain turned over several of our elder poets with the hope of lighting on them, I applied to Dr. Maxwell, now resident at Bath, for the purpose of ascertaining their author: but that gentleman could furnish no aid on this occasion. At length the lines have been discovered by the author's second son, Mr. James Boswell, in "The London Magazine" for July, 1732, where they form part of a poem on "Retirement," there published anonymously, but in fact (as he afterwards found) copied, with some slight variations, from one of Walsh's smaller poems, entitled "The Retirement;" and they exhibit another proof of what has been elsewhere observed by the author of the work before us, that Johnson retained in his memory fragments of obscure or neglected poetry. In quoting verses of that description, he appears by a slight deviation to have sometimes given them a moral turn, and to have dexterously adapted them to his own sentiments, where the original had a very different tendency. Thus, in the present instance (as Mr. J. Boswell observes to me), "the author of the poem above-mentioned exhibits himself as having retired to the country, to avoid the vain follies of a town life,—ambition avarice, and the pursuit of pleasure, contrasted with the enjoyments of the country, and the delightful conversation that the brooks, &c., furnish; which he holds to be infinitely more pleasing and instructive than any which towns afford. He is then led to consider the weakness

surely applaud the earnestness with which he averted the calamity of war: a calamity so dreadful, that it is astonishing how civilised, nay, Christian nations can deliberately continue to renew it. His description of its miseries in this pamphlet, is one of the finest pieces of eloquence in the English language. Upon this occasion, too, we find Johnson lashing the party in opposition with unbounded severity, and

of the human mind, and, after lamenting that he (the writer), who is neither enslaved by avarice, ambition, or pleasure, has yet made himself a slave to *love*, he thus proceeds:

' If this dire passion never will be gone,  
If beauty always must my heart enthral,  
O, rather let me be confined by *one*,  
Than madly thus become a slave to all:

' One who has early known the pomp of state,  
(For things unknown 'tis ignorance to condemn;)  
And, after having view'd the gaudy bait,  
Can coldly say, the trifle I condemn;

' In her blest arms contented could I live,  
Contented could I die. But O, my mind,  
Imaginary scenes of bliss deceive  
With hopes of joys impossible to find.' "

Another instance of Johnson's retaining in his memory verses by obscure authors, is given in Mr. Boswell's "Journal of a Tour in the Hebrides;" where, in consequence of hearing a girl spinning in a chamber over that in which he was sitting, he repeated these lines, which he said were written by one Gifford, a clergyman; but the poem in which they are introduced, has hitherto been undiscovered:—

" Verse sweetens toil, however rude the sound:  
All at her work the village maiden sings:  
Nor while she turns the giddy wheel around,  
Revolves the sad vicissitude of things."

In the autumn of 1782, when he was at Brighthelmstone, he frequently accompanied Mr. Philip Metcalfe in his chaise, to take the air; and the conversation in one of their excursions happening to turn on a celebrated historian, since deceased, he repeated, with great precision, some verses, as very characteristic of that gentleman. These furnish another proof of what has been above observed; for they are found in a very obscure quarter, among some anonymous poems appended to the second volume of a collection frequently printed by Lintot, under the title of "Pope's Miscellanies

" See how the wand'ring Danube flows,  
Realms and religions parting;  
A friend to all true Christian foes,  
To Peter, Jack, and Martin.

" Now Protestant, and Papist now,  
Not constant long to either,  
At length an infidel does grow,  
And ends his journey neither.

" Thus many a youth I've known set out,  
Half Protestant, half Papist,  
And rambling long the world about,  
Turn infidel or atheist."

In reciting these verses I have no doubt that Johnson substituted some word for *infidel* in the second stanza, to avoid the disagreeable repetition of the same expression.—MALONE.

making the fullest use of what he ever reckoned a most effectual argumentative instrument—contempt. His character of their very able mysterious champion, Junius, is executed with all the force of his genius, and finished with the highest care. He seems to have exulted in sallying forth to single combat against the boasted and formidable hero, who bade defiance to “principalities and powers, and the rulers of this world.”

This pamphlet, it is observable, was softened in one particular, after the first edition; for the conclusion of Mr. George Grenville's character stood thus: “Let him not, however, be depreciated in his grave. He had powers not universally possessed: could he have enforced payment of the Manilla ransom, *he could have counted it.*” Which instead of retaining its sly sharp point, was reduced to a mere flat unmeaning expression, or, if I may use the word—*truism*: “He had powers not universally possessed: and if he sometimes erred, he was likewise sometimes right.”

“TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

“DEAR SIR,

March 20, 1771.

“After much lingering of my own, and much of the ministry, I have at length got out my paper.<sup>1</sup> But delay is not yet at an end: not many had been dispersed before Lord North ordered the sale to stop. His reasons I do not distinctly know. You may try to find them in the perusal.<sup>2</sup> Before his order, a sufficient number were dispersed to do all the mischief, though, perhaps, not to make all the sport that might be expected from it.

“Soon after your departure, I had the pleasure of finding all the danger past with which your navigation was threatened. I hope nothing happens at home to abate your satisfaction; but that Lady Rothes and Mrs. Langton, and the young ladies, are all well.

“I was last night at THE CLUB. Dr. Percy has written a long ballad in many *fits*; it is pretty enough. He has printed, and will soon publish it. Goldsmith is at Bath with Lord Clare. At Mr. Thrale's, where I am now writing, all are well. I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

Mr. Strahan, the printer, who had been long in intimacy with Johnson, in the course of his literary labours, who was at once his friendly agent in receiving his pension for him, and his banker in supplying him with money when he wanted it; who was himself now a member of Parliament, and who loved much to be employed in political negotiation: thought he should do eminent service, both to government and

<sup>1</sup> “Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands.”

<sup>2</sup> By comparing the first with the subsequent editions, this curious circumstance of ministerial authorship may be discovered.

It can only be discovered (as Mr. Bindley observes to me) by him who possesses a copy of the first edition issued out before the sale was stopped.—MALONE.

Johnson, if he could be the means of his getting a seat in the House of Commons. With this view, he wrote a letter to one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, of which he gave me a copy in his own handwriting, which is as follows :—

“SIR,

*New-street, March 30, 1771.*

“You will easily recollect, when I had the honour of waiting upon you some time ago, I took the liberty to observe to you, that Dr. Johnson would make an excellent figure in the House of Commons, and heartily wished he had a seat there. My reasons are briefly these :

“I know his perfect good affection to his Majesty and his government, which I am certain he wishes to support by every means in his power.

“He possesses a great share of manly, nervous; and ready eloquence ; is quick in discerning the strength and weakness of an argument ; can express himself with clearness and precision, and fears the face of no man alive.

“His known character, as a man of extraordinary sense and unimpeached virtue, would secure him the attention of the House, and could not fail to give him a proper weight there.

“He is capable of the greatest application, and can undergo any degree of labour, where he sees it necessary, and where his heart and affections are strongly engaged. His Majesty’s ministers might therefore securely depend on his doing, upon every proper occasion, the utmost that could be expected from him. They would find him ready to vindicate such measures as tended to promote the stability of government, and resolute and steady in carrying them into execution. Nor is anything to be apprehended from the supposed impetuosity of his temper. To the friends of the king you will find him a lamb, to his enemies a lion.

“For these reasons I humbly apprehend that he would be a very able and useful member. And I will venture to say, the employment would not be disagreeable to him ; and knowing, as I do, his strong affection to the king, his ability to serve him in that capacity, and the extreme ardour with which I am convinced he would engage in that service, I must repeat that I wish most heartily to see him in the House.

“If you think this worthy of attention, you will be pleased to take a convenient opportunity of mentioning it to Lord North. If his lordship should happily approve of it, I shall have the satisfaction of having been, in some degree, the humble instrument of doing my country, in my opinion, a very essential service. I know your good nature, and your zeal for the public welfare, will plead my excuse for giving you this trouble. I am, with the greatest respect, Sir,

“Your most obedient and humble servant,

“WILLIAM STRAHAN.”

This recommendation, we know, was not effectual ; but how, or for what reason, can only be conjectured. It is not to be believed that Mr. Strahan would have applied unless Johnson had approved of it. I never heard him mention the subject ; but at a later period of his life, when Sir Joshua Reynolds told him that Mr. Edmund Burke had said that, if he had come early into Parliament, he certainly would have

been the greatest speaker that ever was there, Johnson exclaimed, "I should like to try my hand now."

It has been much agitated among his friends and others, whether he would have been a powerful speaker in Parliament, had he been brought in when advanced in life. I am inclined to think that his extensive knowledge, his quickness and force of mind, his vivacity and richness of expression, his wit and humour, and above all his poignancy of sarcasm, would have had great effect in a popular assembly; and that the magnitude of his figure, and striking peculiarity of his manner, would have aided the effect. But I remember it was observed by Mr. Flood, that Johnson, having been long used to sententious brevity and the short flights of conversation, might have failed in that continued and expanded kind of argument which is requisite in stating complicated matters in public speaking; and, as a proof of this, he mentioned the supposed speeches in Parliament written by him for the magazine, none of which, in his opinion, were at all like real debates. The opinion of one who was himself so eminent an orator, must be allowed to have great weight. It was confirmed by Sir William Scott, who mentioned that Johnson had told him that he had several times tried to speak in the Society of Arts and Manufactures, but "had found he could not get on."<sup>1</sup> From Mr. William Gerard Hamilton I have heard that Johnson, when observing to him that it was prudent for a man who had not been accustomed to speak in public to begin his speech in as simple a manner as possible, acknowledged that he rose in that society to deliver a speech which he had prepared; "but," said he, "all my flowers of oratory forsook me." I, however, cannot help wishing that he *had* "tried his hand in Parliament;" and I wonder that the ministry did not make the experiment.

I at length renewed a correspondence which had been too long discontinued:—

"TO DR. JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR,

*Edinburgh, April 18, 1771.*

"I can now fully understand those intervals of silence in your correspondence with me, which have often given me anxiety and uneasiness; for although I am conscious that my veneration and love for Mr. Johnson have never in the least abated, yet I have deferred for almost a year and a half to write to him."

In the subsequent part of this letter, I gave him an account of my comfortable life as a married man and a lawyer in practice at the Scotch bar; invited him to Scotland, and promised to attend him to the Highlands and Hebrides.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Kippis, however ("Biograph. Britan." article "J. Gilbert Cooper," p. 266, n. new edit.), says, that he "once heard Dr. Johnson speak in the Society of Arts and Manufactures, upon a subject relative to mechanics, with a propriety, perspicuity, and energy which excited general admiration."—MALONE.

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

*London, June 20, 1771.*

“ If you are now able to comprehend that I might neglect to write without diminution of affection, you have taught me, likewise, how that neglect may be uneasily felt without resentment. I wished for your letter a long time, and when it came, it amply recompensed the delay. I never was so much pleased as now with your account of yourself; and sincerely hope, that between public business, improving studies, and domestic pleasures, neither melancholy nor caprice will find any place for entrance. Whatever philosophy may determine of material nature, it is certainly true of intellectual nature, that it *abhors a vacuum*: our minds cannot be empty; and evil will break in upon them, if they are not pre-occupied by good. My dear Sir, mind your studies, mind your business, make your lady happy, and be a good Christian. After this,

*‘tristitiam et metus*

*Trades protervis in mare Creticum*  
*Fortare ventis.’*

“ If we perform our duty, we shall be safe and steady, ‘*Sive per,*’ &c., whether we climb the Highlands, or are tossed among the Hebrides; and I hope the time will come when we may try our powers both with cliffs and water. I see but little of Lord Elibank, I know not why; perhaps by my own fault. I am this day going into Staffordshire and Derbyshire for six weeks.

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Your most affectionate and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, IN LEICESTER FIELDS.

“ DEAR SIR,

*Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, July 17, 1771.*

“ When I came to Lichfield, I found that my portrait<sup>1</sup> had been much visited, and much admired. Every man has a lurking wish to appear considerable in his native place; and I was pleased with the dignity conferred by such a testimony of your regard.

“ Be pleased, therefore, to accept the thanks of, Sir,

“ Your most obliged and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ Compliments to Miss Reynolds.”

“ TO DR. JOHNSON.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

*Edinburgh, July 27, 1771.*

“ The bearer of this, Mr. Beattie, professor of moral philosophy at Aberdeen, is desirous of being introduced to your acquaintance. His genius and learning, and labours in the service of virtue and religion, render him very worthy of it: and as he has a high esteem of your character, I hope you will give him a favourable reception.

I ever am, &c., JAMES BOSWELL.”

The second portrait of Johnson, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds; with his arms raised, and his hands bent. It was at this time, it is believed, in the possession of Miss Lucy Porter and is still probably at Lichfield.—MALONE.

“ TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT LANGTON, NEAR SPILSBY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

“ DEAR SIR,

August 29, 1771.

“ I am lately returned from Staffordshire and Derbyshire. The last letter mentions two others which you have written to me since you received my pamphlet. Of these two I never had but one, in which you mentioned a design of visiting Scotland, and by consequence, put my journey to Langton



LANGTON HALL.

out of my thoughts. My summer wanderings are now over, and I am engaging in a very great work, the revision of my Dictionary; from which I know not, at present, how to get loose.

“ If you have observed, or been told, any errors or omissions, you will do me a great favour by letting me know them.

“ Lady Rothes, I find, has disappointed you and herself. Ladies will have these tricks. The Queen and Mrs. Thrale, both ladies of experience, yet both missed their reckoning this summer. I hope a few months will recompense your uneasiness.

“ Please to tell Lady Rothes how highly I value the honour of her invitation, which it is my purpose to obey as soon as I have disengaged myself. In the meantime I shall hope to hear often of her ladyship, and every day better news and better, till I hear that you have both the happiness, which to both is very sincerely wished, by, Sir,

“ Your most affectionate and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”



In October I again wrote to him, thanking him for his last letter, and his obliging reception of Mr. Beattie; informing him that I had been at Alnwick lately, and had good accounts of him from Dr. Percy.

In his religious record of this year we observe that he was better than usual, both in body and mind, and better satisfied with the regularity of his conduct. But he is still "trying his ways" too rigorously. He charges himself with not rising early enough; yet he mentions what was surely a sufficient excuse for this, supposing it to be a duty seriously required, as he all his life appears to have thought it. "One great hindrance is want of rest; my nocturnal complaints grow less troublesome towards morning: and I am tempted to repair the deficiencies of the night."<sup>1</sup> Alas! how hard would it be, if this indulgence were to be imputed to a sick man as a crime. In his retrospect on the following Easter-eve, he says, "When I review the last year, I am able to recollect so little done, that shame and sorrow, though perhaps too weakly, come upon me." Had he been judging of any one else in the same circumstances, how clear would he have been on the favourable side. How very difficult, and, in my opinion, almost constitutionally impossible it was for him to be raised early, even by the strongest resolutions, appears from a note in one of his little paper-books (containing words arranged for his Dictionary), written I suppose about 1753: "I do not remember that, since I left Oxford, I ever rose early by mere choice, but once or twice at Edial, and two or three times for 'The Rambler.'" I think he had fair ground enough to have quieted his mind on the subject, by concluding that he was physically incapable of what is at best but a commodious regulation.

<sup>1</sup> "Prayers and Meditations," p. 101—BOSWELL.



DR. BEATTIE.

## CHAPTER V.—1772.

DR. BEATTIE—BOSWELL RETURNS TO LONDON—LORD MONBODDO—SCOTCH CHURCH—SECOND SIGHT—THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES—ROYAL MARRIAGE BILL—FOOTE'S MIMICRY—FOURTH EDITION OF THE DICTIONARY PREPARED—MR. PEYTON—ORIGIN OF LANGUAGES—FLOGGING—SCOTTISH ACCENT—GHOST STORIES—RANELAGH—HON. THOMAS ERSKINE—GENERAL COLETHORPE—GOLDSMITH'S NATURAL HISTORY—JOHNSON'S ADVICE TO AUTHORS—HIS OPINION ON A POINT OF SCOTCH LAW.

IN 1772 he was altogether quiescent as an author ; but it will be found, from the various evidences which I shall bring together, that his mind was acute, lively, and vigorous.

“ TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

“ DEAR SIR,

*Feb. 27, 1772.*

“ Be pleased to send to Mr. Banks, whose place of residence I do not know, this note, which I have sent open, that, if you please, you may read it.

“ When you send it, do not use your own seal. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ TO JOSEPH BANKS, ESQ.

“ Perpetua ambitâ his terrâ præmia lactis  
Hæc habet altrici Capra secunda Jovis.”<sup>1</sup>

“ SIR,

*Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, February 27, 1772.*

“ I return thanks to you and to Dr. Solander for the pleasure which I received in yesterday's conversation. I could not recollect a motto for your ‘Goat,’ but had given her one. You, Sir, may perhaps have an epic poem from some happier pen than, Sir, your most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

<sup>1</sup> Thus translated by a friend :—

“ In fame scarce second to the nurse of Jove,  
This goat, who twice the world had traversed round,  
Deserving both her master's care and love,  
Ease and perpetual pasture now has found.”—BOSWELL.

“ TO DR. JOHNSON.

MY DEAR SIR,

“ It is hard that I cannot prevail on you to write to me oftener. But I am convinced that it is in vain to expect from you a private correspondence with any regularity. I must, therefore, look upon you as a fountain of wisdom, from whence few rills are communicated to a distance, and which must be approached at its source, to partake fully of its virtues.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ I am coming to London soon, and am to appear in an appeal from the Court of Session in the House of Lords. A schoolmaster in Scotland was, by a court of inferior jurisdiction, deprived of his office, for being somewhat severe in the chastisement of his scholars. The Court of Session considering it to be dangerous to the interest of learning and education, to lessen the dignity of teachers, and make them afraid of too indulgent parents, instigated by the complaints of their children, restored him. His enemies have appealed to the House of Lords, though the salary is only twenty pounds a year. I was counsel for him here. I hope there will be little fear of a reversal; but I must beg to have your aid in my plan of supporting the decree. It is a general question and not a point of particular law.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ I am, &c., JAMES BOSWELL.”

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

*March 15, 1772.*

“ That you are coming so soon to town I am very glad; and still more glad that you are coming as an advocate. I think nothing more likely to make your life pass happily away, than that consciousness of your own value, which eminence in your profession will certainly confer. If I can give you any collateral help, I hope you do not suspect that it will be wanting. My kindness for you has neither the merit of singular virtue, nor the reproach of singular prejudice. Whether to love you be right or wrong, I have many on my side. Mrs. Thrale loves you, and Mrs. Williams loves you, and what would have inclined me to love you, if I had been neutral before, you are a great favourite of Dr. Beattie.

“ Of Dr. Beattie I should have thought much, but that his lady puts him out of my head; she is a very lovely woman.

“ The ejection which you come hither to oppose, appears very cruel, unreasonable, and oppressive. I should think there could not be much doubt of your success.

“ My health grows better, yet I am not fully recovered. I believe it is held that men do not recover very fast after three score. I hope yet to see Beattie's College; and have not given up the western voyage. But however all this may be or not, let us try to make each other happy when we meet, and not refer our pleasure to distant times or distant places.

“ How comes it that you tell me nothing of your lady? I hope to see her some time, and till then shall be glad to hear of her.

“ I am, dear Sir, &c.,  
“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., NEAR SPILSBY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

“ DEAR SIR,

March 14, 1772.

“ I congratulate you and Lady Rothes<sup>1</sup> on your little man, and hope you will all be many years happy together.

“ Poor Miss Langton can have little part in the joy of her family. She this day called her aunt Langton to receive the sacrament with her; and made me talk yesterday on such subjects as suit her condition. It will probably be her *viaticum*. I surely need not mention again that she wishes to see her mother.

I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

On the 21st of March, I was happy to find myself again in my friend's study, and was glad to see my old acquaintance, Mr. Francis Barber, who was now returned home. Dr. Johnson received me with a hearty welcome; saying, “ I am glad you are come, and glad you are come upon such an errand” (alluding to the cause of the schoolmaster). BOSWELL: “ I hope, Sir, he will be in no danger. It is a very delicate matter to interfere between a master and his scholars: nor do I see how you can fix the degree of severity that a master may use.” JOHNSON: “ Why, Sir, till you can fix the degree of obstinacy and negligence of the scholars, you cannot fix the degree of severity of the master. Severity must be continued until obstinacy be subdued, and negligence be cured.” He mentioned the severity of Hunter, his own master. “ Sir,” said I, “ Hunter is a Scotch name: so it should seem this schoolmaster who beat you so severely was a Scotchman. I can now account for your prejudice against the Scotch.” JOHNSON: “ Sir, he was not Scotch; and, abating his brutality, he was a very good master.”

We talked of his two political pamphlets, “ The False Alarm,” and “ Thoughts concerning Falkland's Islands.” JOHNSON: “ Well, Sir, which of them did you think the best?” BOSWELL: “ I liked the second best.” JOHNSON: “ Why, Sir, I liked the first best; and Beattie liked the first best. Sir, there is a subtlety of disquisition in the first, that is worth all the fire of the second.” BOSWELL: “ Pray, Sir, is it true that Lord North paid you a visit, and that you got two hundred a year in addition to your pension?” JOHNSON: “ No, Sir. Except what I had from the bookseller, I did not get a farthing by them. And, between you and me, I believe Lord North is no friend to me.” BOSWELL: “ How so, Sir?” JOHNSON: “ Why, Sir, you cannot account for the fancies of men. Well, how does Lord Elibank? and how does Lord Monboddo?” BOSWELL: “ Very well, Sir. Lord Monboddo still

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Langton married May 24, 1770, Jane, the daughter of — Lloyd, Esq., and widow of John Earl of Rothes, many years Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland, who died in 1767.—MALONE.

maintains the superiority of the savage life.”<sup>1</sup> JOHNSON: “What strange narrowness of mind now is that, to think the things we have not known are better than the things which we have known.” BOSWELL: “Why, Sir, that is a common prejudice.” JOHNSON: “Yes, Sir, but a common prejudice should not be found in one whose trade it is to rectify error.”

A gentleman having come in who was to go as a mate in the ship along with Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, Dr. Johnson asked what were the names of the ships destined for the expedition. The gentleman answered, they were once to be called “The Drake” and “The Raleigh,” but now they were to be called “The Resolution” and “The Adventure.”

JOHNSON: “Much better; for had ‘The Raleigh’ returned without going round the world, it would have been ridiculous. To give them the names of ‘The Drake’ and ‘The Raleigh’ was laying a trap for satire.”

BOSWELL: “Had not you some desire to go upon this expedition, Sir?”

JOHNSON: “Why, yes, but I soon laid it aside. Sir, there is very little of intellectual, in the course. Besides, I see but at a small distance. So it was not worth my while to go to see birds fly, which I should not have seen fly; and fishes swim, which I should not have seen swim.”

The gentleman being gone, and Dr. Johnson having left the room for some time, a debate arose between the Reverend Mr. Stockdale and Mrs. Desmoulins, whether Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander were entitled to any share of glory from their expedition. When Dr. Johnson returned to us, I told him the subject of their dispute. JOHNSON: “Why, Sir, it was properly for botany that they went out; I believe they thought only of culling of simples.”

I thanked him for showing civilities to Beattie. “Sir,” said he, “I should thank *you*. We all love Beattie. Mrs. Thrale says, if ever she has another husband, she’ll have Beattie. He sunk upon us<sup>2</sup> that he

<sup>1</sup> James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, a distinguished Scotch judge. Though both learned and acute, he exposed himself to much deserved ridicule by asserting the existence of mermaids and satyrs, but more particularly by his whimsical speculations relative to a supposed affinity between the human race and the monkey tribe.—ED.

“MY DEAR SIR,

*Edinburgh, May 3, 1792.*

“As I suppose your great work will soon be reprinted, I beg leave to trouble you with a remark on a passage of it, in which I am a little misrepresented. Be not alarmed; the misrepresentation is not imputable to you. Not having the book at hand, I cannot specify the page, but I suppose you will easily find it. Dr. Johnson says, speaking of Mrs. Thrale’s family, ‘Dr. Beattie *sunk upon us* that he was married, or words to that purpose.’ I am not sure that I understand *sunk upon us*, which is a very uncommon phrase; but it seems to me to imply, (and others I find have understood it in the same sense,) *studiously concealed from us his being married*. Now, Sir, this was by no means the case. I could have no motive to conceal a circumstance, of which I never was nor can be ashamed; and of which Dr. Johnson seemed to think, when he afterwards became acquainted with Mrs. Beattie, that I had, as was true, reason to be proud. So far was I from concealing her, that my wife had at that time almost as numerous an acquaintance in London as I had myself; and was, not very long after, kindly invited and elegantly entertained at Streatham by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale

was married ; else we should have shown his lady more civilities. She is a very fine woman. But how can you show civilities to a nonentity ? I did not think he had been married. Nay, I did not think about it one way or other ; but he did not tell us of his lady till late."

He then spoke of St. Kilda, the most remote of the Hebrides. I told him, I thought of buying it. JOHNSON : " Pray do, Sir. We will go and pass a winter amid the blasts there. We shall have fine fish, and we will take some dried tongues with us, and some books. We will have a strong-built vessel, and some Orkney men to navigate her. We must build a tolerable house ; but we may carry with us a wooden house ready made, and requiring nothing but to be put up. Consider, Sir, by buying St. Kilda, you may keep the people from falling into worse hands. We must give them a clergyman, and he shall be one of Beattie's choosing. He shall be educated at Marischal College. I'll be your Lord Chancellor, or what you please." BOSWELL : " Are you serious, Sir, in advising me to buy St. Kilda—for if you should advise me to go to Japan, I believe I should do it ?" JOHNSON : " Why yes, Sir, I am serious." BOSWELL : " Why then I'll see what can be done."

I gave him an account of the two parties in the church of Scotland, those for supporting the rights of patrons, independent of the people, and those against it. JOHNSON : " It should be settled one way or other. I cannot wish well to a popular election of the clergy, when I consider that it occasions such animosities, such unworthy courting of the people, such slanders between the contending parties, and other disadvantages. It is enough to allow the people to remonstrate against the nomination of a minister for solid reasons." I suppose he meant heresy or immorality.

He was engaged to dine abroad, and asked me to return to him in the evening, at nine, which I accordingly did.

We drank tea with Mrs. Williams, who told us a story of second sight, which happened in Wales, where she was born. He listened to it very attentively, and said he should be glad to have some instances of that faculty well authenticated. His elevated wish for more and more evidence for spirit, in opposition to the grovelling belief of materialism, led him to a love of such mysterious disquisitions. He again justly observed, that we could have no certainty of the truth of supernatural appearances, unless something was told us which we could not know

" My request, therefore, is, that you would rectify this matter in your new edition. You are at liberty to make what use you please of this letter.

" My best wishes ever attend you and your family. Believe me to be, with the utmost regard and esteem, dear Sir,

" Your obliged and affectionate humble servant,

" J. BEATTIE."

I have, from my respect for my friend Dr. Beattie, and regard to his extreme sensibility, inserted the foregoing letter, though I cannot but wonder at his considering as any imputation a phrase commonly used among the best friends.—BOSWELL.

by ordinary means, or something done which could not be done but by supernatural power ; that Pharaoh in reason and justice required such evidence from Moses ; nay, that our Saviour said, " If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." He had said in the morning, that Macaulay's " History of St. Kilda" was very well written, except some foppery about liberty and slavery. I mentioned to him that Macaulay told me, he was advised to leave out of his book the wonderful story that upon the approach of a stranger, all the inhabitants catch cold ; but that it had been so well authenticated, he determined to retain it. JOHNSON : " Sir, to leave things out of a book, merely because people tell you they will not be believed, is meanness. Macaulay acted with more magnanimity."

We talked of the Roman Catholic religion, and how little difference there was in essential matters between ours and it. JOHNSON : " True, Sir ; all denominations of Christians have really little difference in point of doctrine, though they may differ widely in external forms. There is a prodigious difference between the external form of one of your Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, and a church in Italy ; yet the doctrine taught is essentially the same."

I mentioned the petition to Parliament for removing the subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. JOHNSON : " It was soon thrown out. Sir, they talk of not making boys at the University subscribe to what they do not understand ; but they ought to consider, that our Universities were founded to bring up members for the Church of England, and we must not supply our enemies with arms from our arsenal. No, Sir, the meaning of subscribing is, not that they fully understand all the articles ; but that they will adhere to the Church of England. Now take it in this way, and suppose that they should only subscribe their adherence to the Church of England, there would be still the same difficulty ; for still the young men would be subscribing to what they do not understand. For if you should ask them, What do you mean by the Church of England ? Do you know in what it differs from the Presbyterian Church—from the Romish Church—from the Greek Church—from the Coptic Church ? they could not tell you. So, Sir, it comes to the same thing." BOSWELL : " But would it not be sufficient to subscribe the Bible ?" JOHNSON : " Why no, Sir ; for all sects will subscribe the Bible ; nay, the Mahometans will subscribe the Bible ; for the Mahometans acknowledge JESUS CHRIST, as well as Moses, but maintain that GOD sent Mahomet as a still greater prophet than either."

I mentioned the motion which had been made in the House of Commons, to abolish the fast of the 30th of January. JOHNSON : " Why, Sir, I could have wished that it had been a temporary act, perhaps, to have expired with the century. I am against abolishing it, because that would be declaring it wrong to establish it ; but I should have no

objection to make an act, continuing it for another century, and then letting it expire."

He disapproved of the Royal Marriage Bill; "Because," said he, "I would not have the people think that the validity of marriage depends on the will of man, or that the right of a king depends on the will of man. I should not have been against making the marriage of any of the royal family, without the approbation of king and parliament, highly criminal."

In the morning we had talked of old families, and the respect due to them. JOHNSON: "Sir, you have a right to that kind of respect, and are arguing for yourself. I am for supporting the principle, and am disinterested in doing it, as I have no such right." BOSWELL: "Why, Sir, it is one more incitement to a man to do well." JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir, and it is a matter of opinion very necessary to keep society together. What is it but opinion, by which we have a respect for authority, that prevents us, who are the rabble, from rising up and pulling down you who are gentlemen from your places, and saying, 'We will be gentlemen in our turn!' Now, Sir, that respect for authority is much more easily granted to a man whose father has had it, than to an upstart, and so society is more easily supported." BOSWELL: "Perhaps, Sir, it might be done by the respect belonging to office, as among the Romans, where the dress, the *toga*, inspired reverence." JOHNSON: "Why, we know very little about the Romans. But, surely, it is much easier to respect a man who has always had respect, than to respect a man whom we know was last year no better than ourselves, and will be no better next year. In republics there is no respect to authority, but a fear of power." BOSWELL: "At present, Sir, I think riches seem to gain most respect." JOHNSON: "No, Sir, riches do not gain hearty respect; they only procure external attention. A very rich man, from low beginnings, may buy his election in a borough; but, *cæteris paribus*, a man of family will be preferred. People will prefer a man for whose father their fathers have voted, though they should get no more money, or even less. That shows that the respect for family is not merely fanciful, but has an actual operation. If gentlemen of family would allow the rich upstarts to spend their money profusely, which they are ready enough to do, and not vie with them in expense, the upstarts would soon be at an end, and the gentlemen would remain; but if the gentlemen will vie in expense with the upstarts, which is very foolish, they must be ruined."

I gave him an account of the excellent mimicry of a friend of mine in Scotland; observing, at the same time, that some people thought it a very mean thing. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, it is making a very mean use of man's powers. But to be a good mimic requires great powers; great acuteness of observation, great retention of what is observed, and great pliancy of organs to represent what is observed. I remember a lady of quality in this town, Lady — —, who was a wonderful



mimic, and used to make me laugh immoderately. I have heard she is now gone mad." BOSWELL: "It is amazing how a mimic can not only give you the gestures and voice of a person whom he represents; but even what a person would say on any particular subject." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, you are to consider that the manner and some particular phrases of a person do much to impress you with an idea of him, and you are not sure that he would say what the mimic says in his character." BOSWELL: "I don't think Foote a good mimic, Sir." JOHNSON: "No, Sir; his imitations are not like. He gives you some thing different from himself, but not the character which he means to assume. He goes out of himself, without going into other people. He cannot take off any person unless he is strongly marked, such as George Faulkner. He is like a painter who can draw the portrait of a man who has a wen upon his face, and who therefore is easily known. If a man hops upon one leg, Foote can hop upon one leg. But he has not that nice discrimination which your friend seems to possess. Foote is, however, very entertaining with a kind of conversation between wit and buffoonery."

On Monday, March 23, I found him busy, preparing a fourth edition of his folio Dictionary. Mr. Peyton, one of his original amanuenses, was writing for him. I put him in mind of a meaning of the word *side*, which he had omitted, viz. relationship; as father's side, mother's side. He inserted it. I asked him if *humiliating* was a good word. He said, he had seen it frequently used, but he did not know it to be legitimate English. He would not admit *civilization*, but only *civility*. With great deference to him I thought *civilization*, from to *civilize*, better in the sense opposed to *barbarity* than *civility*; as it is better to have a distinct word for each sense, than one word with two senses, which *civility* is, in his way of using it.

He seemed also to be intent on some sort of chemical operation. I was entertained by observing how he contrived to send Mr. Peyton on an errand, without seeming to degrade him. "Mr. Peyton,—Mr. Peyton, will you be so good as to take a walk to Temple-bar? You will there see a chemist's shop, at which you will be pleased to buy for me an ounce of oil of vitriol; not spirit of vitriol, but oil of vitriol. It will cost three halfpence." Peyton immediately went, and returned with it, and told him it cost but a penny.

I then reminded him of the schoolmaster's cause, and proposed to read to him the printed papers concerning it. "No, Sir," said he, "I can read quicker than I can hear." So he read them to himself.

After he had read for some time, we were interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Kristrom, a Swede, who was tutor to some young gentlemen in the city. He told me that there was a very good History of Sweden, by Daline. Having at that time an intention of writing the history of that country, I asked Dr. Johnson whether one might write a history of

Sweden without going thither. "Yes, Sir," said he, "one for common use."

We talked of languages. Johnson observed that Leibnitz had made some progress in a work, tracing all languages up to the Hebrew. "Why Sir," said he, "you would not imagine that the French *jour*, day, is derived from the Latin *dies*, and yet nothing is more certain; and the intermediate steps are very clear. From *dies*, comes *diurnus*. *Diu* is, by inaccurate ears, or inaccurate pronunciation, easily confounded with *giu*; then the Italians form a substantive of the ablative of an adjective, and thence *giurno*, or, as they make it, *giorno*: which is readily contracted into *giour* or *jour*." He observed that the Bohemian language was true Slavonic. The Swede said, it had some similarity with the German. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, to be sure, such parts of Slavonia as confine with Germany, will borrow German words; and such parts as confine with Tartary will borrow Tartar words."

He said, he never had it properly ascertained that the Scotch Highlanders and the Irish understood each other. I told him that my cousin, Colonel Graham, of the Royal Highlanders, whom I met at Drogheda, told me they did. JOHNSON: "Sir, if the Highlanders understood Irish, why translate the New Testament into Erse, as was lately done at Edinburgh, when there is an Irish translation?" BOSWELL: "Although the Erse and Irish are both dialects of the same language, there may be a good deal of diversity between them, as between the different dialects in Italy."—The Swede went away, and Mr. Johnson continued his reading of the papers. I said, "I am afraid, Sir, it is troublesome." "Why, Sir," said he, "I do not take much delight in it; but I'll go through it."

We went to the Mitre, and dined in the room where he and I first supped together. He gave me great hopes of my cause. "Sir," said he, "the government of a schoolmaster is somewhat of the nature of military government; that is to say, it must be arbitrary, it must be exercised by the will of one man, according to particular circumstances. You must show some learning upon this occasion. You must show that a schoolmaster has a prescriptive right to beat; and that an action of assault and battery cannot be admitted against him unless there is some great excess, some barbarity. This man has maimed none of his boys. They are all left with the full exercise of their corporeal faculties. In our schools in England, many boys have been maimed; yet I never heard of an action against a schoolmaster on that account. Puffendorf, I think, maintains the right of a schoolmaster to beat his scholars."

On Saturday, March 27, I introduced to him Sir Alexander Macdonald, with whom he had expressed a wish to be acquainted. He received him very courteously.

Sir Alexander observed, that the Chancellors in England are chosen from views much inferior to the office, being chosen from temporary political views. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, in such a government as ours,

no man is appointed to an office because he is the fittest for it, nor hardly in any other government: because there are so many connections and dependencies to be studied. A despotic prince may choose a man to an office, merely because he is the fittest for it. The King of Prussia may do it." SIR A.: "I think, Sir, almost all great lawyers, such at least as have written upon law, have known only law, and nothing else." JOHNSON: "Why no, Sir; Judge Hale was a great lawyer, and wrote upon law; and yet he knew a great many other things, and has written upon other things. Selden too." SIR A.: "Very true, Sir; and Lord Bacon. But was not Lord Coke a mere lawyer?" JOHNSON: "Why, I am afraid he was; but he would have taken it very ill if you had told him so. He would have prosecuted you for scandal." BOSWELL: "Lord Mansfield is not a mere lawyer." JOHNSON: "No, Sir, I never was in Lord Mansfield's company; but Lord Mansfield was distinguished at the University. Lord Mansfield, when he first came to town, 'drank champagne with the wits,' as Prior says. He was the friend of Pope." SIR A.: "Barristers, I believe, are not so abusive now as they were formerly. I fancy they had less law long ago, and so were obliged to take to abuse, to fill up the time. Now they have such a number of precedents, they have no occasion for abuse." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, they had more law long ago than they have now. As to precedents, to be sure they will increase in course of time; but the more precedents there are, the less occasion is there for law; that is to say, the less occasion is there for investigating principles." SIR A.: "I have been correcting several Scotch accents in my friend Boswell. I doubt, Sir, if any Scotchman ever attains to a perfect English pronunciation." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, few of them do, because they do not persevere after acquiring a certain degree of it. But, Sir, there can be no doubt that they may attain to a perfect English pronunciation, if they will. We find how near they come to it; and certainly a man who conquers nineteen parts of the Scottish accent, may conquer the twentieth. But, Sir, when a man has got the better of nine-tenths he grows weary, he relaxes his diligence, he finds he has corrected his accent so far as not to be disagreeable, and he no longer desires his friends to tell him when he is wrong; nor does he choose to be told. Sir, when people watch me narrowly, and I do not watch myself, they will find me out to be of a particular county. In the same manner, Dunning<sup>1</sup> may be found out to be a Devonshire man. So most Scotchmen may be found out. But, Sir, little aberrations are of no disadvantage. I never caught Mallet in a Scotch accent; and yet Mallet, I suppose, was past five-and-twenty before he came to London.

<sup>1</sup> John Dunning, Lord Ashburton, was born at Ashburton in 1731. After serving his clerkship in his father's office, he studied for the bar, and rapidly attained an eminent position in his profession. As counsel for Wilkes, he conducted his cause in such a manner as to establish his fame as a sound lawyer and adroit pleader.—ED.

Upon another occasion I talked to him on this subject, having myself taken some pains to improve my pronunciation, by the aid of the late Mr. Love, of Drury-lane Theatre, when he was a player at Edinburgh, and also of old Mr. Sheridan. Johnson said to me, "Sir, your pronunciation is not offensive." With this concession I was pretty well satisfied; and let me give my countrymen of North Britain an advice not to aim at absolute perfection in this respect; not to speak *High English*, as we are apt to call what is far removed from the *Scotch*, but which is by no means *good English*, and makes "the fools who use it" truly ridiculous. Good English is plain, easy, and smooth in the mouth of an unaffected English gentleman. A studied and facetious pronunciation, which requires perpetual attention, and imposes perpetual constraint, is exceedingly disgusting. A small intermixture of provincial peculiarities may, perhaps, have an agreeable effect, as the notes of different birds concur in the harmony of the grove, and please more than if they were all exactly alike. I could name some gentlemen of Ireland, to whom a slight proportion of the accent and recitative of that country is an advantage. The same observation will apply to the gentlemen of Scotland. I do not mean that we should speak as broad as a certain prosperous member of Parliament from that country (Mr. Dundas); though it has been well observed, that "it has been of no small use to him; as it rouses the attention of the house by its uncommonness; and is equal to tropes and figures in a good English speaker." I would give as an instance of what I mean to recommend to my countrymen, the pronunciation of the late Sir Gilbert Elliot; and may I presume to add that of the present Earl of Marchmont, who told me, with great good humour, that the master of a shop in London, where he was not known, said to him, "I suppose, Sir, you are an American!" "Why so, Sir?" said his lordship. "Because, Sir," replied the shopkeeper, "you speak neither English nor Scotch, but something different from both, which I conclude is the language of America."

BOSWELL: "It may be of use, Sir, to have a Dictionary to ascertain pronunciation." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, my Dictionary shows you the accent of words, if you can but remember them." BOSWELL: "But Sir, we want marks to ascertain the pronunciation of the vowels. Sheridan, I believe, has finished such a work." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, consider how much easier it is to learn a language by the ear, than by any marks. Sheridan's Dictionary may do very well; but you cannot always carry it about with you: and, when you want the word, you have not the Dictionary. It is like a man who has a sword that will not draw. It is an admirable sword, to be sure: but while your enemy is cutting your throat, you are unable to use it. Besides, Sir, what entitles Sheridan to fix the pronunciation of English? He has, in the first place, the disadvantage of being an Irishman; and if he says he will fix it after the example of the best company, why they differ among

themselves. I remember an instance : when I published the plan for my Dictionary, Lord Chesterfield told me that the word *great* should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *state* ; and Sir William Yonge sent me word that it should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *seat*, and that none but an Irishman would pronounce it *grait*. Now here were two men of the highest rank, the one the best speaker in the House of Lords, the other the best speaker in the House of Commons, differing entirely."

I again visited him at night. Finding him in a very good humour, I ventured to lead him to the subject of our situation in a future state, having much curiosity to know his notions on that point. JOHNSON : " Why, Sir, the happiness of an unembodied spirit will consist in a consciousness of the favour of God, in the contemplation of truth, and in the possession of felicitating ideas." BOSWELL : " But, Sir, is there any harm in our forming to ourselves conjectures as to the particulars of our happiness, though the scripture has said but very little on the subject ? ' We know not what we shall be.' " JOHNSON : " Sir, there is no harm. What philosophy suggests to us on this topic is probable : what scripture tells us is certain. Dr. Henry More has carried it as far as philosophy can. You may buy both his theological and philosophical works in two volumes folio, for about eight shillings." BOSWELL : " One of the most pleasing thoughts is that we shall see our friends again."<sup>1</sup> JOHNSON : " Yes, Sir ; but you must consider, that when we are become purely rational, many of our friendships will be cut off. Many friendships are formed by a community of sensual pleasures : all these will be cut off. We form many friendships with bad men, because they have agreeable qualities, and they can be useful to us : but, after death, they can no longer be of use to us. We form many friendships by mistake, imagining people to be different from what they really are. After death, we shall see every one in a true light. Then, Sir, they talk of our meeting our relations ; but then all relationship is dissolved ; and we shall have no regard for one person more than another, but for their real value. However, we shall either have the satisfaction of meeting our friends, or be satisfied without meeting them." BOSWELL : " Yet, Sir, we see in scripture, that Dives still retained an anxious concern about his brethren." JOHNSON : " Why, Sir, we must either suppose that passage to be metaphorical, or hold with many divines, and all the Purgatorians, that departed souls do not all at once arrive at the utmost perfection of which they are capable." BOSWELL : " I think, Sir, that is a very rational supposition." JOHNSON : " Why, yes, Sir ; but we do not know it is a true one. There is no harm in believing it ; but you must not compel others to make it an article of faith ; for it is not revealed." BOSWELL : " Do you think, Sir, it is wrong in a man

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Hall, in his Epistle, " discoursing of the different degrees of heavenly glory, and of our mutual knowledge of each other above," (Dec. iii. c. 6,) holds the affirmative on both these questions.—MALONE.

who holds the doctrine of Purgatory, to pray for the souls of his deceased friends?" JOHNSON: "Why no, Sir." BOSWELL: "I have been told that in the Liturgy of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, there was a form of prayer for the dead." JOHNSON: "Sir, it is not in the Liturgy which Laud framed for the Episcopal Church of Scotland; if there is a liturgy older than that, I should be glad to see it." BOSWELL: "As to our employment in a future state, the sacred writings say little. The Revelation, however, of St. John gives us many ideas, and particularly mentions music." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, ideas must be given you by means of something which you know; and as to music there are some philosophers and divines who have maintained that we shall not be spiritualised to such a degree, but that something of matter, very much refined, will remain. In that case, music may make a part of our future felicity."

BOSWELL: "I do not know whether there are any well-attested stories of the appearance of ghosts. You know there is a famous story of the appearance of Mrs. Veal, prefixed to 'Drelincourt on Death.'" JOHNSON: "I believe, Sir, that is given up. I believe the woman declared upon her death-bed that it was a lie."<sup>1</sup> BOSWELL: "This objection is made against the truth of ghosts appearing: that if they are in a state of happiness, it would be a punishment to them to return to this world; and if they are in a state of misery, it would be giving them a respite." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, as the happiness or misery of embodied spirits does not depend upon place, but is intellectual, we cannot say that they are less happy or less miserable by appearing upon earth."

We went down between twelve and one to Mrs. Williams's room, and drank tea. I mentioned that we were to have the remains of Mr. Gray, in prose and verse, published by Mr. Mason. JOHNSON: "I think we have had enough of Gray. I see they have published a splendid edition of Akenside's works. One bad Ode may be suffered; but a number of them together makes one sick." BOSWELL: "Akenside's distinguished poem is his 'Pleasures of Imagination;' but for my part, I never could admire it so much as most people do." JOHNSON: "Sir, I could not read it through." BOSWELL: "I have read it through; but I did not find any great power in it."

I mentioned Elwal, the heretic, whose trial Sir John Pringle had given me to read. JOHNSON: "Sir, Mr. Elwal was, I think, an iron-monger at Wolverhampton; and he had a mind to make himself famous, by being the founder of a new sect, which he wished much should be called *Elwallians*. He held, that everything in the Old Testament that was not typical, was to be of perpetual observance: and so he wore a riband in the plaits of his coat, and he also wore a beard. I remember

<sup>1</sup> This fiction is known to have been invented by Daniel Defoe, and was added to the second edition of the English translation of Drelincourt's work (which was originally written in French) to make it sell. The first edition had it not.—MALONE.

I had the honour of dining in company with Mr. Elwal. There was one Barter, a miller, who wrote against him; and you had the controversy between Mr. Elwal and Mr. Barter. To try to make himself distinguished, he wrote a letter to King George the Second, challenging him to dispute with him, in which he said, 'George, if you be afraid to come by yourself, to dispute with a poor old man, you may bring a thousand of your *black-guards* with you; and if you should still be afraid, you may bring a thousand of your *red-guards*.' The letter had something of the impudence of Junius to our present king. But the men of Wolverhampton were not so inflammable as the common-council of London; so Mr. Elwal failed in his scheme of making himself a man of great consequence."

On Tuesday, March 31, he and I dined at General Paoli's. A question was started whether the state of marriage was natural to man. JOHNSON: "Sir, it is so far from being natural for a man and woman to live in a state of marriage, that we find all the motives which they have for remaining in that connection, and the restraints which civilised society imposes to prevent separation, are hardly sufficient to keep them together." The General said, that in a state of nature a man and woman uniting together, would form a strong and constant affection, by the mutual pleasure each would receive; and that the same causes of dissension would not arise between them, as occur between husband and wife in a civilised state." JOHNSON: "Sir, they would have dissensions enough, though of another kind. One would choose to go a-hunting in this wood, the other in that; one would choose to go a-fishing in this lake, the other in that; or perhaps one would choose to go a-hunting, when the other would choose to go a-fishing; and so they would part. Besides, Sir, a savage man and a savage woman meet by chance; and when the man sees another woman that pleases him better, he will leave the first."

We then fell into a disquisition whether there is any beauty independent of utility. The General maintained there was not. Dr. Johnson maintained that there was; and he instanced a coffee-cup which he held in his hand, the painting of which was of no real use, as the cup could hold the coffee equally well if plain; yet the painting was beautiful.

We talked of the strange custom of swearing in conversation. The General said, that all barbarous nations swore from a certain violence of temper, that could not be confined to earth, but was always reaching at the powers above. He said, too, that there was greater variety of swearing, in proportion as there was a greater variety of religious ceremonies."

Dr. Johnson went home with me to my lodgings in Conduit-street and drank tea, previous to our going to the Pantheon, which neither of us had seen before.

He said, "Goldsmith's Life of Parnell is poor; not that it is poorly

written, but that he had poor materials; for nobody can write the life of a man, but those who have eat and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him."

I said, that if it was not troublesome and presuming too much, I would request him to tell me all the little circumstances of his life; what schools he attended, when he came to Oxford, when he came to London, &c. &c. He did not disapprove of my curiosity as to these particulars; but said, "They'll come out by degrees, as we talk together."

He censured Ruffhead's Life of Pope; and said, "he knew nothing of Pope, and nothing of poetry." He praised Dr. Joseph Warton's Essay on Pope; but said, "he supposed we should have no more of it, as the author had not been able to persuade the world to think of Pope as he did." BOSWELL: "Why, Sir, should that prevent him from continuing his work? He is an ingenious counsel, who has made the most of his cause: he is not obliged to gain it." JOHNSON: "But, Sir, there is a difference when the cause is of a man's own making."

We talked of the proper use of riches. JOHNSON: "If I were a man of a great estate, I would drive all the rascals whom I did not like out of the county at an election."

I asked him, how far he thought wealth should be employed in hospitality. JOHNSON: "You are to consider that ancient hospitality, of which we hear so much, was in an uncommercial country, when men being idle, were glad to be entertained at rich men's tables. But in a commercial country, a busy country, time becomes precious, and therefore hospitality is not so much valued. No doubt there is still room for a certain degree of it; and a man has a satisfaction in seeing his friends eating and drinking around him. But promiscuous hospitality is not the way to gain real influence. You must help some people at table before others; you must ask some people how they like their wine oftener than others. You therefore offend more people than you please. You are like the French statesman, who said, when he granted a favour, '*J'ai ait dix mécontents et un ingrat.*'<sup>1</sup> Besides, Sir, being entertained ever so well at a man's table, impresses no lasting regard or esteem. No, Sir, the way to make sure of power and influence is, by lending money confidentially to your neighbours at a small interest, or perhaps at no interest at all, and having their bonds in your possession." BOSWELL: "May not a man, Sir, employ his riches to advantage, in educating young men of merit?" JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir, if they fall in your way; but if it be understood that you patronise young men of merit, you will be harassed with solicitations. You will have numbers forced upon you, who have no merit; some will force them upon you from mistaken partiality; and some from downright interested motives, without scruple; and you will be disgraced."

<sup>1</sup> A well-known saying of Louis the Fourteenth.—ED.



"Were I a rich man, I would propagate all kinds of trees that will grow in the open air. A greenhouse is childish. I would introduce foreign animals into the country: for instance, the reindeer."<sup>1</sup>

The conversation now turned on critical subjects. JOHNSON: "Bayes, in 'The Rehearsal,' is a mighty silly character. If it was intended to be like a particular man, it could only be diverting while that man was remembered. But I question whether it was meant for Dryden, as has been reported; for we know some of the passages said to be ridiculed, were written since 'The Rehearsal;' at least a passage mentioned in the Preface<sup>2</sup> is of a later date." I maintained that it had merit as a general satire on the self-importance of dramatic authors. But even in this light he held it very cheap.

We then walked to the Pantheon.<sup>3</sup> The first view of it did not strike us so much as Ranelagh, of which he said, the *coup d'œil* was the finest thing he had ever seen. The truth is, Ranelagh is of a more beautiful form; more of it, or rather indeed the whole *rotunda*, appear at once, and it is better lighted. However, as Johnson observed, we saw the Pantheon in time of mourning, when there was a dull uniformity; whereas we had seen Ranelagh when the view was enlivened with a gay profusion of colours. Mrs. Bosville, of Gunthwait, in Yorkshire, joined us, and entered into conversation with us. Johnson said to me afterwards, "Sir, this is a mighty intelligent lady."

I said there was not half a guinea's worth of pleasure in seeing this place. JOHNSON: "But, Sir, there is half a guinea's worth of inferiority to other people in not having seen it." BOSWELL: "I doubt, Sir, whether there are many happy people here." JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir, there are many happy people here. There are many people here who are watching hundreds, and who think hundreds are watching them."

Happening to meet Sir Adam Ferguson, I presented him to Dr. Johnson. Sir Adam expressed some apprehension that the Pantheon would encourage luxury. "Sir," said Johnson, "I am a great friend to public amusements; for they keep people from vice. You now (addressing himself to me), would have been with a wench, had you not been here. Oh! I forgot you were married."

<sup>1</sup> This project has since been realised. Sir Henry Liddel, who made a spirited tour into Lapland, brought two rein-deer to his estate in Northumberland, where they bred: but the race has unfortunately perished.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> There is no preface to "The Rehearsal," as originally published. Dr. Johnson seems to have meant the address to the Reader, with a Key subjoined to it, which have been prefixed to the modern editions of that play. He did not know, it appears, that several *additions* were made to "The Rehearsal" after the first edition. The ridicule on the passages here alluded to is found among those *additions*. They therefore furnish no ground for the doubts here suggested. Unquestionably Bayes was meant to be the representative of Dryden, whose familiar phrases in his ordinary conversation are frequently introduced in this piece.—MALONE.

In Oxford-street; converted into the present bazaar in 1834.—Ed.

Sir Adam suggested, that luxury corrupts a people, and destroys the spirit of liberty. JOHNSON: "Sir, that is all visionary. I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another. It is of no moment to the happiness of an individual. Sir, the danger of the abuse of power is nothing to a private man. What Frenchman is prevented from passing his life as he pleases?" SIR ADAM: "But, Sir, in the British constitution it is surely of importance to keep up a spirit in the people, so as to preserve a balance against the crown." JOHNSON: "Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig.—Why all this childish jealousy of the power of the crown? The crown has not power enough. When I say that all governments are alike, I consider that in no government power can be abused long. Mankind will not bear it. If a sovereign oppresses his people to a great degree, they will rise and cut off his head. There is a remedy in human nature against tyranny, that will keep us safe under every form of government. Had not the people of France thought themselves honoured in sharing in the brilliant actions of Louis XIV., they would not have endured him; and we may say the same of the King of Prussia's people." Sir Adam introduced the ancient Greeks and Romans. JOHNSON: "Sir, the mass of both of them were barbarians. The mass of every people must be barbarous where there is no printing, and consequently knowledge is not generally diffused. Knowledge is diffused among our people by the newspapers." Sir Adam mentioned the orators, poets, and artists of Greece. JOHNSON: "Sir, I am talking of the mass of the people. We see even what the boasted Athenians were. The little effect which Demosthenes's orations had upon them, shows that they were barbarians."

Sir Adam was unlucky in his topics; for he suggested a doubt of the propriety of bishops having seats in the House of Lords. JOHNSON: "How so, Sir? Who is more proper for having the dignity of a peer than a bishop, provided a bishop be what he ought to be; and if improper bishops be made, that is not the fault of the bishops, but of those who make them."

On Sunday, April 5, after attending divine service at St. Paul's church, I found him alone. Of a schoolmaster of his acquaintance, a native of Scotland, he said, "He has a great deal of good about him; but he is also very defective in some respects. His inner part is good, but his outer part is mighty awkward. You in Scotland do not attain that nice critical skill in languages which we get in our schools in England. I would not put a boy to him whom I intended for a man of learning. But for the sons of citizens, who are to learn a little, get good morals, and then go to trade, he may do very well."

I mentioned a cause in which I had appeared as counsel at the bar of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, where a *Pro-bationer* (as one licensed to preach, but not yet ordained, is called), was

opposed in his application to be inducted, because it was alleged that he had been guilty of fornication five years before. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, if he has repented, it is not a sufficient objection. A man who is good enough to go to heaven, is good enough to be a clergyman." This was a humane and liberal sentiment. But the character of a clergyman is more sacred than that of an ordinary Christian. As he is to instruct with authority, he should be regarded with reverence, as one upon whom divine truth has had the effect to set him above such transgressions, as men, less exalted by spiritual habits, and yet upon the whole not to be excluded from heaven, have been betrayed into the predominance of passion. That clergymen may be considered as sinners in general, as all men are, cannot be denied; but this reflection will not counteract their good precepts so much as the absolute knowledge of their having been guilty of certain specific immoral acts. I told him, that by the rules of the Church of Scotland, in their "Book of Discipline," if a *scandal*, as it is called, is not prosecuted for five years, it cannot afterwards be proceeded upon, "unless it be of a *heinous nature*, or again become flagrant;" and that hence a question arose whether fornication was a sin of a heinous nature; and that I had maintained that it did not deserve that epithet, inasmuch as it was not one of those sins which argue very great depravity of heart: in short, in the general acceptation of mankind, a heinous sin. JOHNSON: "No, Sir, it is not a heinous sin. A heinous sin is that for which a man is punished with death or banishment." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, after I had argued that it was not a heinous sin, an old clergyman rose up, and repeated the text of scripture denouncing judgment against whoremongers, asked whether, considering this, there could be any doubt of fornication being a heinous sin." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, observe the word *whoremonger*. Every sin, if persisted in, would become heinous. Whoremonger is a dealer in whores, as ironmonger is a dealer in iron. But as you don't call a man an ironmonger for buying and selling a penknife, so you don't call a man a whoremonger for getting one wench with child."<sup>1</sup>

I spoke of the inequality of the livings of the clergy in England, and the scanty provisions of some of the curates. JOHNSON: "Why yes, Sir; but it cannot be helped. You must consider that the revenues of the clergy are not at the disposal of the state, like the pay of the army. Different men have founded different churches; and some are better endowed, some worse. The state cannot interfere and make an equal division of what has been particularly appropriated. Now when a clergyman has but a small living, or even two small livings, he can afford very little to the curate."

He said, he went more frequently to church when there were prayers

<sup>1</sup> It must not be presumed that Dr. Johnson meant to give any countenance to licentiousness, though in the character of an advocate he made a just and subtle distinction between occasional and habitual transgression.—BOSWELL.

only than when there was also a sermon, as the people required more an example for the one than the other; it being much easier for them to hear a sermon than to fix their minds on prayer.

On Monday, April 6, I dined with him at Sir Alexander Macdonald's, where was a young officer in the regimentals of the Scots Royal, who talked with a vivacity, fluency, and precision so uncommon, that he attracted particular attention. He proved to be the Honourable Thomas Erskine,<sup>1</sup> youngest brother to the Earl of Buchan, who has since risen into such brilliant reputation at the bar in Westminster-hall.



HON. THOMAS ERSKINE.

Fielding being mentioned, Johnson exclaimed, "he was a blockhead;" and upon my expressing my astonishment at so strange an assertion, he said, "What I mean by his being a blockhead is, that he was a barren rascal." BOSWELL: "Will you not allow, Sir, that he draws very natural pictures of human life?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, it is of very low life. Richardson used to say that, had he not known who Fielding was, he should have believed he was an ostler. Sir, there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's, than in all 'Tom Jones.'<sup>2</sup> I, indeed, never read 'Joseph Andrews.'" ERSKINE:

"Surely, Sir, Richardson is very tedious." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving occasion to the sentiment."—I have already given my opinion of Fielding; but I cannot refrain from repeating here my wonder at Johnson's excessive and unaccountable depreciation of one of the best writers that England has produced: "Tom Jones" has stood the test of public opinion with such success as to have established its great merit, both for the story, the sentiments, and the manners, and also the varieties of diction, so as to leave no doubt of its having an animated truth of execution throughout.

The book of travels, lately published under the title of *Coriat Junior*,

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Chancellor of England.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson's severity against Fielding did not arise from any viciousness in his style, but from his loose life, and the profligacy of almost all his male characters. Who would venture to read one of his novels aloud to modest women? His novels are *male* amusements, and very amusing they certainly are. Fielding's conversation was coarse, and so tinged with the rank weeds of the garden that it would be thought only fit for a brothel.—BURNBY.

and written by Mr. Paterson,<sup>1</sup> was mentioned. Johnson said this book was in imitation of Sterne,<sup>2</sup> and not of Coriat, whose name Paterson had chosen as a whimsical one. "Tom Coriat," said he, "was a humourist about the court of James the First. He had a mixture of learning, of wit, and of buffoonery. He first travelled through Europe, and published his travels. He afterwards travelled on foot through Asia, and had made many remarks; but he died at Mandoa, and his remarks were lost."

We talked of gaming, and animadverted on it with severity. JOHNSON: "Nay, gentlemen, let us not aggravate the matter. It is not roguery to play with a man who is ignorant of the game, while you are master of it, and so win his money: for he thinks he can play better than you, as you think you can play better than he; and the superior skill carries it." ERSKINE: "He is a fool, but you are not a rogue." JOHNSON: "That's much about the truth, Sir. It must be considered that a man who only does what every one of the society to which he belongs would do, is not a dishonest man. In the republic of Sparta it was agreed that stealing was not dishonourable if not discovered. I do not commend a society where there is an agreement that what would not otherwise be fair shall be fair; but I maintain, that an individual of any society, who practises what is allowed, is not a dishonest man." BOSWELL: "So then, Sir, you do not think ill of a man who wins perhaps forty thousand pounds in a winter?" JOHNSON: "Sir, I do not call a gamester a dishonest man; but I call him an unsocial man, an unprofitable man. Gaming is a mode of transferring property without producing any intermediate good, Trade gives employment to numbers, and so produces intermediate good."

Mr. Erskine told us, that when he was in the island of Minorca, he not only read prayers, but preached two sermons to the regiment. He seemed to object to the passage in scripture, where we are told that the angel of the Lord smote, in one night, forty thousand Assyrians.<sup>3</sup> "Sir," said Johnson, "you should recollect that there was a supernatural interposition; they were destroyed by pestilence. You are not to suppose that the angel of the Lord went about and stabbed each of them with a dagger, or knocked them on the head, man by man."

After Mr. Erskine was gone, a discussion took place, whether the present Earl of Buchan, when Lord Cardross, did right to refuse to go Secretary of the Embassy to Spain, when Sir James Gray, a man of inferior rank, went Ambassador. Dr. Johnson said, that perhaps in point of interest he did wrong; but in point of dignity he did well. Sir

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Samuel Paterson, eminent for his knowledge of books.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Paterson, in a pamphlet, produced some evidence to show that his work was written before Sterne's "Sentimental Journey" appeared.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> One hundred and eighty-five thousand. See Isaiah xxxvii. 36, and 2 Kings xix. 35.—MALONE.

Alexander insisted that he was wrong ; and said that Mr. Pitt intended it as an advantageous thing for him. "Why, Sir," said Johnson, "Mr. Pitt might think it an advantageous thing for him to make him a vintner, and get him all the Portugal trade ; but he would have demeaned himself strangely had he accepted of such a situation. Sir, had he gone Secretary while his inferior was Ambassador, he would have been a traitor to his rank and family."

I talked of the little attachment which subsisted between near relations in London. "Sir," said Johnson, "in a country so commercial as ours, where every man can do for himself, there is not so much occasion for that attachment. No man is thought the worse of here whose brother was hanged. In uncommercial countries many of the branches of a family must depend on the stock ; so, in order to make the head of the family take care of them, they are represented as connected with his reputation, that, self-love being interested, he may exert himself to promote their interest. You have first large circles, or clans ; as commerce increases, the connection is confined to families ; by degrees, that, too, goes off, as having become unnecessary, and there being few opportunities of intercourse. One brother is a merchant in the city, and another is an officer in the guards ; how little intercourse can these two have !"

I argued warmly for the old feudal system. Sir Alexander opposed it, and talked of the pleasure of seeing all men free and independent. JOHNSON : "I agree with Mr. Boswell that there must be a high satisfaction in being a feudal lord ; but we are to consider that we ought not wish to have a number of men unhappy for the satisfaction of one." I maintained that numbers, namely the vassals or followers, were not unhappy ; for that there was a reciprocal satisfaction between the lord and them ; he being kind in his authority over them ; they being respectful and faithful to him.

On Thursday, April 9, I called on him to beg he would go and dine with me at the Mitre tavern. He had resolved not to dine at all this day, I know not for what reason ; and I was so unwilling to be deprived of his company, that I was content to submit to suffer a want which was at first somewhat painful, but he soon made me forget it ; and a man is always pleased with himself, when he finds his intellectual inclinations predominate.

He observed, that to reason philosophically on the nature of prayer was very unprofitable.

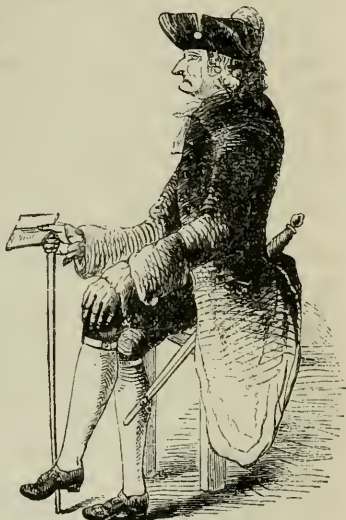
Talking of ghosts, he said, he knew one friend, who was an honest man, and a sensible man, who told him he had seen a ghost : old Mr. Edward Cave, the printer at St. John's Gate. He said Mr. Cave did not like to talk of it, and seemed to be in great horror whenever it was mentioned. BOSWELL : "Pray, Sir, what did he say was the appearance?" JOHNSON : "Why, Sir, something of a shadowy being."

I mentioned witches, and asked him what they properly meant, JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, they properly mean those who make use of the aid of evil spirits." BOSWELL: "There is no doubt, Sir, a general report and belief of their having existed." JOHNSON: "You have not only the general report and belief, but you have many voluntary solemn confessions." He did not affirm anything positively upon a subject which it is the fashion of the times to laugh at as a matter of absurd credulity. He only seemed willing, as a candid inquirer after truth, however strange and inexplicable, to show that he understood what might be urged for it.<sup>1</sup>

On Friday, April 10, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, where we found Dr. Goldsmith.

Armorial bearings having been mentioned, Johnson said they were as ancient as the siege of Thebes, which he proved by a passage in one of the tragedies of Euripides.<sup>2</sup>

I started the question, whether duelling was consistent with moral duty. The brave old General fired at this, and said, with a lofty air, "Undoubtedly a man has a right to defend his honour." GOLDSMITH (turning to me): "I ask you first, Sir, what would you do if you were affronted?" I answered I should think it necessary to fight. "Why, then," replied Goldsmith, "that solves the question." JOHNSON: "No, Sir, it does not solve the question. It does not follow that what a man would do, is, therefore, right." I said, I wished to have it settled whether duelling was contrary to the laws of Christianity. Johnson immediately entered on the subject, and treated it in a masterly manner; and, so far as I have been able to recollect, his thoughts were these:—"Sir, as



GENERAL OGLETHORPE.

See this curious question treated by him with most acute ability, "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," 3rd edit. p. 23.—BOSWELL.  
<sup>2</sup> The passage to which Johnson alluded, is to be found (as I conjecture) in the ΠΑΡΘΕΝΙΣΣÆ, l. 1120.

Καὶ πρῶτα μὲν προσῆγε, κ. τ. λ.

Ὁ τῆς κυναγοῦ Παρθενοπαῖος ἐκγονος,

ΕΠΙΣΗΜ, ἔχῃν ΟΙΚΕΙΟΝ ἐν μέσῳ σακεῖ.—J. BOSWELL.

Translation—"In the centre of his shield Parthenopæus bore the domestic symbol of Atalanta slaying the Ætolian boar."

men become in a high degree refined, various causes of offence arise, which are considered to be of such importance, that life must be staked to atone for them, though in reality they are not so. A body that has received a very fine polish may be easily hurt. Before men arrive at this artificial refinement, if one tells his neighbour—he lies, his neighbour tells him—he lies; if one gives his neighbour a blow, his neighbour gives him a blow; but in a state of highly polished society, an affront is held to be a serious injury. It must, therefore, be resented, or rather a duel must be fought upon it; as men have agreed to banish from their society one who puts up with an affront without fighting a duel. Now, Sir, it is never unlawful to fight in self-defence. He, then, who fights a duel, does not fight from passion against his antagonist, but out of self-defence; to avert the stigma of the world, and to prevent himself from being driven out of society. I could wish there was not that superfluity of refinement; but while such notions prevail, no doubt a man may lawfully fight a duel."

Let it be remembered, that this justification is applicable only to the person who *receives* an affront. All mankind must condemn the aggressor.

The General told us that, when he was a very young man, I think only fifteen, serving under Prince Eugene of Savoy, he was sitting in a company at table with a Prince of Wirtemberg. The Prince took up a glass of wine, and, by a fillip, made some of it fly in Oglethorpe's face. Here was a nice dilemma. To have challenged him instantly might have fixed a quarrelsome character upon the young soldier: to have taken no notice of it, might have been considered as cowardice. Oglethorpe, therefore, keeping his eye upon the Prince, and smiling all the time, as if he took what his Highness had done in jest, said, "*Mon Prince,*—" (I forget the French words he used, the purport, however, was,) "That's a good joke: but we do it much better in England;" and threw a whole glass of wine in the Prince's face. An old General, who sat by, said "*Il a bien fait, mon Prince, vous l'avez commenc *:" and thus all ended in good humour.

Dr. Johnson said, "Pray, General, give us an account of the siege of Belgrade." Upon which the General, pouring a little wine upon the table, described everything with a wet finger:—"Here we were, here were the Turks," &c. &c. Johnson listened with the closest attention.

A question was started, how far people who disagree in a capital point can live in friendship together. Johnson said they might. Goldsmith said they could not, as they had not the *idem velle atque idem nolle*—the same likings and the same aversions. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, you must shun the subject as to which you disagree. For instance, I can live very well with Burke; I love his knowledge, his genius, his diffusion, and affluence of conversation; but I would not talk to him of the Rockingham party." GOLDSMITH: "But, Sir, when people live



together who have something as to which they disagree, and which they want to shun, they will be in the situation mentioned in the story of Bluebeard: 'You may look into all the chambers but one.' But we should have the greatest inclination to look into that chamber, to talk of that subject." JOHNSON (with a loud voice): "Sir, I am not saying that *you* could live in friendship with a man from whom you differ as to some point: I am only saying that *I* could do it. You put me in mind of Sappho in Ovid."<sup>1</sup>

Goldsmith told us that he was now busy in writing a Natural History; and, that he might have full leisure for it, he had taken lodgings at a farmer's house, near to the six mile-stone, on the Edgeware-road, and had carried down his books in two returned post-chaises. He said he believed the farmer's family thought him an odd character, similar to that in which the *Spectator* appeared to his landlady and her children: he was *The Gentleman*. Mr. Mickle, the translator of "The Lusiad," and I went to visit him at this place a few days afterwards: he was not at home; but, having a curiosity to see his apartment, we went in, and found curious scraps of descriptions of animals, scrawled upon the wall with a black-lead pencil.

The subject of ghosts being introduced, Johnson repeated what he had told me of a friend of his, an honest man, and a man of sense, having asserted to him that he had seen an apparition. Goldsmith told us he was assured by his brother, the Reverend Mr. Goldsmith, that he also had seen one. General Oglethorpe told us that Prendergast, an officer in the Duke of Marlborough's army, had mentioned to many of his friends that he should die on a particular day; that upon that day

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Boswell's note here being rather short, as taken at the time, (with a view perhaps to future revision,) Johnson's remark is obscure, and requires to be a little opened. What he said, probably was, "You seem to think that two friends, to live well together, must be in perfect harmony with each other; that each should be to the other what Sappho boasts she was to her lover, and uniformly agree in every particular: but this is by no means necessary," &c.—The words of Sappho alluded to, are:—"omnique à parte placebam." Ovid. Epist. Sapp. ad Phaonem. l. 51.—MALONE.

I should rather conjecture that the passage which Johnson had in view was the following, l. 45—

"Si, nisi quæ facie poterit te digna videri  
Nulla futura tua est; nulla futura tua est."

His reasoning and its illustration I take to be this. If you are determined to associate with no one whose sentiments do not universally coincide with your own, you will, by such a resolution, exclude yourself from all society, for no two men can be found who, on all points, invariably think alike. So Sappho in Ovid tells Phaon, that if he will not unite himself to any one who is not a complete resemblance of himself, it will be impossible for him to form any union at all.

The lines which I have quoted are thus expanded in Pope's Paraphrase, which, to say the truth, I suspect was at this moment more in Johnson's recollection than the original:

"If to no charms thou wilt thy heart resign  
But such as merit, such as equal thine,  
By none, alas, by none, thou canst be moved,  
Phaon alone by Phaon must be loved."—J. BOSWELL.

a battle took place with the French; that after it was over, and Prendergast was still alive, his brother officers, while they were yet in the field, jestingly asked him where was his prophecy now. Prendergast gravely answered, "I shall die, notwithstanding what you see." Soon afterwards there came a shot from a French battery, to which the orders for a cessation of arms had not reached, and he was killed upon the spot. Colonel Cecil, who took possession of his effects, found in his pocket-book the following solemn entry:

[Here the date.] "Dreamt—or—————<sup>1</sup> Sir John Friend meets me:" (here the very day on which he was killed was mentioned.) Prendergast had been connected with Sir John Friend, who was executed for high treason. General Oglethorpe said he was with Colonel Cecil, when Pope came and inquired into the truth of this story, which made a great noise at the time, and was then confirmed by the Colonel.

On Saturday, April 11th, he appointed me to come to him in the evening, when he should be at leisure to give me some assistance for the defence of Hastie, the schoolmaster of Campbelltown, for whom I was to appear in the House of Lords. When I came, I found him unwilling to exert himself. I pressed him to write down his thoughts upon the subject. He said, "There's no occasion for my writing. I'll talk to you." He was, however, at last prevailed on to dictate to me, while I wrote as follows:

"The charge is, that he has used immoderate and cruel correction. Correction, in itself, is not cruel; children, being not reasonable, can be governed only by fear. To impress this fear is, therefore, one of the first duties of those who have the care of children. It is the duty of a parent; and has never been thought inconsistent with parental tenderness. It is the duty of a master, who is in his highest exaltation when he is *loco parentis*. Yet, as good things become evil by excess, correction, by being immoderate, may become cruel. But when is correction immoderate? When it is more frequent or more severe than is required *ad monendum et docendum*, for reformation and instruction. No severity is cruel which obstinacy makes necessary; for the greatest cruelty would be to desist, and leave the scholar too careless for instruction, and too much hardened for reproof. Locke, in his treatise of Education, mentions a mother, with applause, who whipped an infant eight times before she had subdued it; for had she stopped at the seventh act of correction, her daughter, says he, would have been ruined. The degrees of obstinacy in young minds are very different: as different must be the degrees of persevering severity. A stubborn scholar must be corrected till he is subdued. The discipline of a school is military. There

<sup>1</sup> Here was a blank, which may be filled up thus:—"was told by an apparition;"—the writer being probably uncertain whether he was asleep or awake, when his mind was impressed with the solemn presentiment with which the fact afterwards happened so wonderfully to correspond.—BOSWELL.

must be either unbounded licence or absolute authority. The master who punishes, not only consults the future happiness of him who is the immediate subject of correction, but he propagates obedience through the whole school; and establishes regularity by exemplary justice. The victorious obstinacy of a single boy would make his future endeavours of reformation or instruction totally ineffectual. Obstinacy, therefore, must never be victorious. Yet, it is well known, that there sometimes occurs a sullen and hardy resolution, that laughs at all common punishment, and bids defiance to all common degrees of pain. Correction must be proportionate to occasions. The flexible will be reformed by gentle discipline, and the refractory must be subdued by harsher methods. The degrees of scholastic, as of military punishment, no stated rules can ascertain. It must be enforced till it overpowers temptation: till stubbornness becomes flexible, and perverseness regular. Custom and reason have, indeed, set some bounds to scholastic penalties. The schoolmaster inflicts no capital punishments; nor enforces his edicts by either death or mutilation. The civil law has wisely determined, that a master who strikes at a scholar's eye shall be considered as criminal. But punishments, however severe, that produce no lasting evil, may be just and reasonable, because they may be necessary. Such have been the punishments used by the respondent. No scholar has gone from him either blind or lame, or with any of his limbs or powers injured or impaired. They were irregular, and he punished them, they were obstinate, and he enforced his punishment. But however provoked, he never exceeded the limits of moderation, for he inflicted nothing beyond present pain: and how much of that was required, no man is so little able to determine as those who have determined against him—the parents of the offenders.—It has been said, that he used unprecedented and improper instruments of correction. Of this accusation the meaning is not very easy to be found. No instrument of correction is more proper than another, but as it is better adapted to produce present pain without lasting mischief. Whatever were his instruments, no lasting mischief has ensued; and therefore, however unusual, in hands so cautious, they were proper.—It has been objected, that the respondent admits the charge of cruelty, by producing no evidence to confute it. Let it be considered, that his scholars are either dispersed at large in the world, or continue to inhabit the place in which they were bred. Those who are dispersed cannot be found; those who remain are the sons of his prosecutors, and are not likely to support a man to whom their fathers are enemies. If it be supposed that the enmity of their fathers proves the justness of the charge, it must be considered how often experience shows us, that men who are angry on one ground will accuse on another; with how little kindness, in a town of low trade, a man who lives by learning is regarded; and how implicitly, where the inhabitants are not very rich, a rich man is harkened to and followed.

In a place like Campbells-town, it is easy for one of the principal inhabitants to make a party. It is easy for that party to heat themselves with imaginary grievances. It is easy for them to oppress a man poorer than themselves; and natural to assert the dignity of riches, by persisting in oppression. The argument which attempts to prove the impropriety of restoring him to the school, by alleging that he has lost the confidence of the people, is not the subject of juridical consideration; for he is to suffer, if he must suffer, not for their judgment, but for his own actions. It may be convenient for them to have another master; but it is a convenience of their own making. It would be likewise convenient for him to find another school; but this convenience he cannot obtain.—The question is not what is now convenient, but what is generally right. If the people of Campbells-town be distressed by the restoration of the respondent, they are distressed only by their own fault; by turbulent passions and unreasonable desires; by tyranny, which law has defeated, and by malice, which virtue has surmounted.”

“This, Sir,” said he, “you are to turn in your mind, and make the best use of it you can in your speech.”

Of our friend Goldsmith he said, “Sir, he is so much afraid of being unnoticed, that he often talks merely lest you should forget that he is in the company.” BOSWELL: “Yes, he stands forward.” JOHNSON: “True, Sir; but if a man is to stand forward, he should wish to do it not in an awkward posture, not in rags, not so as that he shall only be exposed to ridicule.” BOSWELL: “For my part, I like very well to hear honest Goldsmith talk away carelessly.” JOHNSON: “Why, yes, Sir, but he should not like to hear himself.”

On Tuesday, April 14, the decree of the Court of Session in the schoolmaster's cause was reversed in the House of Lords, after a very eloquent speech by Lord Mansfield, who showed himself an adept in school discipline, but I thought was too rigorous towards my client. On the evening of the next day, I supped with Dr. Johnson, at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in the Strand, in company with Mr. Langton and his brother-in-law, Lord Binning. I repeated a sentence of Lord Mansfield's speech, of which, by the aid of Mr. Longlands, the solicitor on the other side, who obligingly allowed me to compare his note with my own, I have a full copy: “My Lords, severity is not the way to govern either boys or men.” “Nay,” said Johnson, “it is the way to govern them. I know not whether it be the way to mend them.”

I talked of the recent expulsion of six students from the University of Oxford, who were methodists, and would not desist from publicly praying and exhorting. JOHNSON: “Sir, that expulsion was extremely just and proper. What have they to do at an University, who are not willing to be taught, but will presume to teach? Where is religion to be learnt, but at an University? Sir, they were examined, and found to be mighty ignorant fellows.” BOSWELL: “But, was it not hard, Sir,

to expel them, for I am told they were good beings?" JOHNSON: "I believe they might be good beings, but they were not fit to be in the University of Oxford. A cow is a very good animal in the field, but we turn her out of a garden." Lord Elibank used to repeat this as an illustration uncommonly happy.

Desirous of calling Johnson forth to talk and exercise his wit, though I should myself be the object of it, I resolutely ventured to undertake the defence of convivial indulgence in wine, though he was not to night in the most genial humour. After urging the common plausible topics, I at last had recourse to the maxim *in vino veritas*, a man who is well warmed with wine will speak truth. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, that may be an argument for drinking, if you suppose men in general to be liars. But, Sir, I would not keep company with a fellow who lies as long as he is sober, and whom you must make drunk before you can get a word of truth out of him."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Langton told us he was about to establish a school upon his estate, but it had been suggested to him, that it might have a tendency to make the people less industrious. JOHNSON: "No, Sir. While learning to read and write is a distinction, the few who have that distinction may be the less inclined to work; but when everybody learns to read and write it is no longer a distinction. A man who has a laced waistcoat is too fine a man to work; but if everybody had laced waistcoats, we should have people working in laced waistcoats. There are no people whatever more industrious, none who work more, than our manufacturers; yet they have all learned to read and write. Sir, you must not neglect doing a thing immediately good, from fear of remote evil—from fear of its being abused. A man who has candles may sit up too late, which he would not do if he had not candles; but nobody will deny that the art of making candles, by which light is continued to us beyond the time that the sun gives us light, is a valuable art, and ought to be preserved." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, would it not be better to follow nature, and go to bed and rise just as nature gives us light or withholds it?" JOHNSON: "No, Sir; for then we should have no kind of equality in the partition of our time between sleeping and waking. It would be very different in different seasons and in different places. In some of the northern parts of Scotland how little light is there in the depth of winter!"

We talked of Tacitus, and I hazarded an opinion, that with all his merit for penetration, shrewdness of judgment, and terseness of expression, he was too compact, too much broken into hints, as it were, and therefore too difficult to be understood. To my great satisfaction

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Piozzi, in her *Anecdotes*, p. 261, has given an erroneous account of this incident, as of many others. She pretends to relate it from recollection, as if she herself had been present; when the fact is, that it was communicated to her by me. She has represented it as a personality, and the true point has escaped her.—BOSWELL.

Dr. Johnson sanctioned this opinion. "Tacitus, Sir, seems to me rather to have made notes for an historical work, than to have written a history."<sup>1</sup>

At this time it appears from his "Prayers and Meditations," that he had been more than commonly diligent in religious duties, particularly in reading the Holy Scriptures. It was Passion Week, that solemn season which the Christian world has appropriated to the commemoration of the mysteries of our redemption, and during which, whatever embers of religion are in our breasts, will be kindled into pious warmth.

I paid him short visits both on Friday and Saturday, and seeing his large folio Greek Testament before him, beheld him with a reverential awe, and would not intrude upon his time. While he was thus employed to such good purpose, and while his friends in their intercourse with him constantly found a vigorous intellect and a lively imagination, it is melancholy to read in his private register, "My mind is unsettled and my memory confused. I have of late turned my thoughts with a very useless earnestness upon past incidents. I have yet got no command over my thoughts; an displeasing incident is almost certain to hinder my rest."<sup>2</sup> What philosophic heroism was it in him to appear with such manly fortitude to the world, while he was inwardly so distressed! We may surely believe that the mysterious principle of being "made perfect through suffering," was to be strongly exemplified in him.

On Sunday, April 19, being Easter-day, General Paoli and I paid him a visit before dinner. We talked of the notion that blind persons can distinguish colours by the touch. Johnson said, that Professor Sanderson<sup>3</sup> mentions his having attempted to do it, but that he found he was aiming at an impossibility; that to be sure a difference in the surface makes the difference of colours; but that difference is so fine that it is not sensible to the touch. The General mentioned jugglers and fraudulent gamblers, who could know cards by the touch. Dr. Johnson said, "The cards used by such persons must be less polished than ours commonly are."

We talked of sounds. The General said there was no beauty in a simple sound, but only in an harmonious composition of sounds. I presumed to differ from this opinion, and mentioned the soft and sweet sound of a fine woman's voice. JOHNSON: "No, Sir, if a serpent or a toad uttered it, you would think it ugly." BOSWELL: "So you would

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that Lord Monboddo, whom, on account of his resembling Dr. Johnson in some particulars, Foote called an Elzevir edition of him, has, by coincidence, made the very same remark. "Origin and Progress of Language," vol. iii. 2nd edit. p. 219.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> "Prayers and Meditations," p. 111.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Sanderson, LL.D., Lucasian Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge, lost his sight by the small-pox when little more than twelvemonths old. He died 1739.—ED.

think, Sir, were a beautiful tune to be uttered by one of those animals." JOHNSON: "No, Sir, it would be admired. We have seen fine fiddlers whom we liked as little as toads," (laughing.)

Talking on the subject of taste in the arts, he said, that difference of taste was, in truth, difference of skill. BOSWELL: "But, Sir, is there not a quality called taste, which consists merely in perception or in liking; for instance, we find people differ much as to what is the best style of English composition. Some think Swift's the best; others prefer a fuller and grander way of writing." JOHNSON: "Sir, you must first define what you mean by style, before you can judge who has a good taste in style, and who has a bad. The two classes of persons whom you have mentioned, don't suffer as to good and bad. They both agree that Swift has a good neat style; but one loves a neat style, another loves a style of more splendour. In like manner, one loves a plain coat, another loves a laced coat; but neither will deny that each is good in its kind."

While I remained in London this spring, I was with him at several other times, both by himself and in company. I dined with him one day at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in the Strand, with Lord Elibank, Mr. Langton, and Dr. Vansittart, of Oxford. Without specifying each particular day, I have preserved the following memorable things:

I regretted the reflection in his Preface to Shakspeare against Garrick, to whom we cannot but apply the following passage: "I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative." I told him, that Garrick had complained to me of it, and had vindicated himself by assuring me, that Johnson was made welcome to the full use of his collection, and that he left the key of it with a servant, with orders to have a fire and every convenience for him. I found Johnson's notion was, that Garrick wanted to be courted for them, and that, on the contrary, Garrick should have courted him, and sent him the plays of his own accord. But, indeed, considering the slovenly and careless manner in which books were treated by Johnson, it could not be expected that scarce and valuable editions should have been lent to him.

A gentleman having, to some of the usual arguments for drinking, added this: "You know, Sir, drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would not you allow a man to drink for that reason?" JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir, if he sat next *you*."

I expressed a liking for Mr. Francis Osborne's works, and asked him what he thought of that writer. He answered, "A conceited fellow. Were a man to write so now, the boys would throw stones at him." He, however, did not alter my opinion of a favourite author, to whom I was first directed by his being quoted in "The Spectator," and in whom I have found much shrewd and lively sense, expressed indeed in a style somewhat quaint, which, however, I do not dislike. His book has an

air of originality. We figure to ourselves an ancient gentleman talking to us.

When one of his friends endeavoured to maintain that a country gentleman might contrive to pass his life very agreeably, "Sir," said he, "you cannot give me an instance of any man who is permitted to lay out his own time, contriving not to have tedious hours." This observation, however, is equally applicable to gentlemen who live in cities, and are of no profession.

He said, "There is no permanent national character; it varies according to circumstances. Alexander the Great swept India; now the Turks sweep Greece." 191

A learned gentleman, who, in the course of conversation, wished to inform us of this simple fact, that the counsel upon the circuit at Shrewsbury were much bitten by fleas, took, I suppose, seven or eight minutes in relating it circumstantially. He, in a plenitude of phrase, told us, that large bales of woollen cloth were lodged in the town-hall; —that by reason of this, fleas nestled there in prodigious numbers; that the lodgings of the counsel were near the town-hall; and that those little animals moved from place to place with wonderful agility. Johnson sat in great impatience till the gentleman had finished his tedious narrative, and then burst out (playfully, however), "It is a pity, Sir, that you have not seen a lion; for a flea has taken you such a time, that a lion must have served you a twelvemonth."<sup>1</sup>

He would not allow Scotland to derive any credit from Lord Mansfield; for he was educated in England. "Much," said he, "may be made of a Scotchman, if he be *caught* young."

Talking of a modern historian and a modern moralist, he said, "There is more thought in the moralist than in the historian. There is but a shallow stream of thought in history." BOSWELL: "But surely, Sir, an historian has reflection." JOHNSON: "Why yes, Sir; and so has a cat when she catches a mouse for her kitten. But she cannot write like \* \* \* \*; neither can \* \* \* \*."<sup>2</sup>

He said, "I am very unwilling to read the manuscripts of authors, and give them my opinion. If the authors who apply to me have money, I bid them boldly print without a name; if they have written in order to get money, I tell them to go to the booksellers and make the best bargain they can." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, if a bookseller should bring you a manuscript to look at." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, I would desire the bookseller to take it away."

I mentioned a friend of mine who had resided long in Spain, and was unwilling to return to Britain. JOHNSON: "Sir, he is attached to some woman." BOSWELL: "I rather believe, Sir, it is the fine climate

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Piozzi, to whom I told this anecdote, has related it, as if the gentleman had given "the natural history of the mouse." Anecdotes, p. 191.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Croker suggests that Doctors Beattie and Robertson are here alluded to.—ED



which keeps him there." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, how can you talk so? What is *climate* to happiness? Place me in the heart of Asia, should I not be exiled? What proportion does climate bear to the complex system of human life? You may advise me to go to live at Bologna to eat sausages. The sausages there are the best in the world; they lose much by being carried."

On Saturday, May 9, Mr. Dempster and I had agreed to dine by ourselves at the British Coffee-house. Johnson, on whom I happened to call in the morning, said he would join us, which he did, and we spent a very agreeable day: though I recollect but little of what passed.

He said, "Walpole was a minister given by the king to the people: Pitt was a minister given by the people to the king,—as an adjunct."

"The misfortune of Goldsmith in conversation is this: he goes on without knowing how he is to get off. His genius is great, but his knowledge is small. As they say of a generous man, it is a pity he is not rich, we may say of Goldsmith, it is a pity he is not knowing. He would not keep his knowledge to himself."

Before leaving London this year, I consulted him upon a question purely of Scotch law. It was held of old, and continued for a long period, to be an established principle in that law that, whoever inter-meddled with the effects of a person deceased, without the interposition of legal authority to guard against embezzlement, should be subjected to pay all the debts of the deceased, as having been guilty of what was technically called *vicious intromission*. The Court of Session had gradually relaxed the strictness of this principle, where the interference proved had been inconsiderable. In a case<sup>1</sup> which came before that Court the preceding winter, I had laboured to persuade the judge to return to the ancient law. It was my own sincere opinion that they ought to adhere to it; but I had exhausted all my powers of reasoning in vain. Johnson thought as I did; and in order to assist me in my application to the Court for a revision and alteration of the judgment he dictated to me the following argument:—

"This, we are told, is a law which has its force only from the long practice of the Court, and may, therefore, be suspended or modified as the Court shall think proper.

"Concerning the power of the Court to make or to suspend a law, we have no intention to inquire. It is sufficient for our purpose that every just law is dictated by reason; and that the practice of every legal court is regulated by equity. It is the quality of reason to be invariable and constant; and of equity, to give to one man what, in the same case, is given to another. The advantage which humanity derives from law is this: that the law gives every man a rule of action, and prescribes a mode of conduct which shall entitle him to the support and protection of society. That the law may be a rule of action, it is

necessary that it be known ; it is necessary that it be permanent and stable. The law is the measure of civil right ; but if the measure be changeable, the extent of the thing measured never can be settled.

“ To permit a law to be modified at discretion, is to leave the community without law. It is to withdraw the direction of that public wisdom, by which the deficiencies of private understanding are to be supplied. It is to suffer the rash and ignorant to act at discretion, and then to depend for the legality of that action on the sentence of the judge. He that is thus governed, lives not by law, but by opinion : not by a certain rule to which he can apply his intention before he acts, but by an uncertain and variable opinion, which he can never know but after he has committed the act on which that opinion shall be passed. He lives by a law (if a law it be) which he can never know before he has offended it. To this case may be justly applied that important principle, *misera est servitus ubi jus est aut incognitum aut vagum*. If intromission be not criminal till it exceeds a certain point, and that point be unsettled, and consequently different in different minds, the right of intromission, and the right of the creditor arising from it, are all *jura vaga*, and, by consequence, are *jura incognita* ; and the result can be no other than a *misera servitus*, an uncertainty concerning the event of action, a servile dependence on private opinion.

“ It may be urged, and with great plausibility, that there may be intromission without fraud ; which, however true, will by no means justify an occasional and arbitrary relaxation of the law. The end of law is protection as well as vengeance. Indeed, vengeance is never used but to strengthen protection. That society only is well governed, where life is freed from danger, and from suspicion ; where possession is so sheltered by salutary prohibitions, that violation is prevented more frequently than punished. Such a prohibition was this, while it operated with its original force. The creditor of the deceased was not only without loss, but without fear. He was not to seek a remedy for an injury suffered ; for injury was warded off.

“ As the law has been sometimes administered, it lays us open to wounds, because it is imagined to have the power of healing. To punish fraud when it is detected is the proper art of vindictive justice ; but to prevent frauds, and make punishment unnecessary, is the great employment of legislative wisdom. To permit intromission, and to punish fraud, is to make law no better than a pitfall. To tread upon the brink is safe ; but to come a step further is destruction. But, surely, it is better to enclose the gulf, and hinder all access, than, by encouraging us to advance a little, to entice us afterwards a little further, and let us perceive our folly only by our destruction.

“ As law supplies the weak with adventitious strength, it likewise enlightens the ignorant with extrinsic understanding. Law teaches us to know when we commit injury and when we suffer it. It fixes certain marks upon actions, by which we are admonished to do or to forbear them. *Qui sibi bene temperat in licitis* (says one of the Fathers), *nunquam cadet in illicita*. He who never intromits at all, will never intromit with fraudulent intentions.

“ The relaxation of the law against vicious intromission has been very favourably represented by a great master of jurisprudence,<sup>1</sup> whose words have

<sup>1</sup> Lord Kames, in his “Historical Law Tracts.”—BOSWELL.

been exhibited with unnecessary pomp, and seem to be considered as irresistibly decisive. The great moment of his authority makes it necessary to examine his position. 'Some ages ago,' says he, 'before the ferocity of the inhabitants of this part of the island was subdued, the utmost severity of the civil law was necessary, to restrain individuals from plundering each other. Thus the man who intermeddled regularly with the moveables of a person deceased, was subjected to all the debts of the deceased without limitation. This makes a branch of the law of Scotland, known by the name of *vicious intromission*; and so rigidly was this regulation applied in our courts of law, that the most trifling moveable abstracted *malá fide*, subjected the intermeddler to the foregoing consequences, which proved in many instances a most rigorous punishment. But this severity was necessary, in order to subdue the undisciplined nature of our people. It is extremely remarkable that, in proportion to our improvement in manners, this regulation has been gradually softened and applied by our sovereign Court with a sparing hand.'

"I find myself under a necessity of observing, that this learned and judicious writer has not accurately distinguished the deficiencies and demands of the different conditions of human life, which, from a degree of savageness and independence, in which all laws are vain, passes or may pass, by innumerable gradations, to a state of reciprocal benignity, in which laws shall be no longer necessary. Men are first wild and unsocial, living each man to himself, taking from the weak and losing to the strong. In their first coalitions of society, much of this original savageness is retained. Of general happiness, the product of general confidence, there is yet no thought. Men continue to prosecute their own advantages by the nearest way; and the utmost severity of the civil law is necessary to restrain individuals from plundering each other. The restraints then necessary, are restraints from plunder, from acts of public violence, and undisguised oppression. The ferocity of our ancestors, as of all other nations, produced not fraud but rapine. They had not yet learned to cheat, and attempted only to rob. As manners grow more polished, with the knowledge of good, men attain likewise dexterity in evil. Open rapine becomes less frequent, and violence gives way to cunning. Those who before invaded pastures and stormed houses, now begin to enrich themselves by unequal contracts and fraudulent intromissions. It is not against the violence of ferocity, but the circumventions of deceit, that this law was framed; and I am afraid the increase of commerce, and the incessant struggle for riches which commerce excites, give us no prospect of an end speedily to be expected of artifice and fraud. It therefore seems to be no very conclusive reasoning which connects those two propositions:—'the nation is become less ferocious, and therefore the laws against fraud and *covin* shall be relaxed.'

"Whatever reason may have influenced the judges to a relaxation of the law, it was not that the nation was grown less fierce; and, I am afraid, it cannot be affirmed that it is grown less fraudulent.

"Since this law has been represented as rigorously and unreasonably penal, it seems not improper to consider what are the conditions and qualities that make the justice or propriety of a penal law.

"To make a penal law reasonable and just, two conditions are necessary, and two proper. It is necessary that the law should be adequate to its end;

that if it be observed, it shall prevent the evil against which it is directed. It is, secondly, necessary that the end of the law be of such importance as to deserve the security of a penal sanction. The other conditions of a penal law, which, though not absolutely necessary, are to a very high degree fit, are, that to the moral violation of the law there are many temptations, and that of the physical observance there is great facility.

“All these conditions apparently concur to justify the law which we are now considering. Its end is the security of property; and property very often of great value. The method by which it effects the security is efficacious, because it admits in its original rigour no gradations of injury; but keeps guilt and innocence apart, by a distinct and definite limitation. He that intromits is criminal; he that intromits not, is innocent. Of the two secondary considerations it cannot be denied that both are in our favour. The temptation to intromit is frequent and strong—so strong and so frequent as to require the utmost activity of justice, and vigilance of caution, to withstand its prevalence; and the method by which a man may entitle himself to legal intromission is so open and so facile, that to neglect it is a proof of fraudulent intention; for why should a man omit to do (but for reasons which he will not confess) that which he can do so easily, and that which he knows to be required by the law? If temptation were rare, a penal law might be deemed unnecessary. If the duty enjoined by the law were of difficult performance, omission, though it could not be justified, might be pitied. But in the present case, neither equity nor compassion operate against it. A useful, a necessary law is broken, not only without a reasonable motive, but with all the inducements to obedience that can be derived from safety and facility.

“I therefore return to my original position that a law, to have its effects, must be permanent and stable. It may be said, in the language of the schools, *Lex non recipit majus et minus*—we may have a law, or we may have no law, but we cannot have half a law. We must either have a rule of action, or be permitted to act by discretion and by chance. Deviations from the law must be uniformly punished, or no man can be certain when he shall be safe.

“That from the rigour of the original institution this Court has sometimes departed cannot be denied. But as it is evident that such deviations, as they make law uncertain, make life unsafe, I hope that of departing from it there will now be an end; that the wisdom of our ancestors will be treated with due reverence; and that consistent and steady decisions will furnish the people with a rule of action, and leave fraud and fraudulent intromissions no future hope of impunity or escape.”

With such comprehension of mind, and such clearness of penetration did he thus treat a subject altogether new to him, without any other preparation than my having stated to him the arguments which had been used on each side of the question. His intellectual powers appeared with peculiar lustre, when tried against those of a writer of such fame as Lord Kames, and that too in his lordship's own department.

This masterly argument, after being prefaced, and concluded with some sentences of my own, and garnished with the usual formularies, was actually printed and laid before the Lords of the Session, but with-

out success. My respected friend Lord Hailes, however, one of that honourable body, had critical sagacity enough to discover a more than ordinary hand in the *petition*. I told him Dr. Johnson had favoured me with his pen. His lordship with wonderful *acumen*, pointed out exactly where his composition began and where it ended. But that I may do impartial justice, and conform to the great rule of courts, *Suum cuique tribuito*, I must add that their lordships in general, though they were pleased to call this a "well-drawn paper," preferred the former very inferior petition which I had written; thus confirming the truth of an observation made to me by one of their number, in a merry mood: "My dear Sir, give yourself no trouble in the composition of the papers you present to us; for, indeed, it is casting pearls before swine."

I renewed my solicitations that Dr. Johnson would this year accomplish his long-intended visit to Scotland.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

August, 31, 1772.

"The regret has not been little with which I have missed a journey so pregnant with pleasing expectations, as that in which I could promise myself not only the gratification of curiosity, both rational and fanciful, but the delight of seeing those whom I love and esteem. \* \* \* But such has been the course of things, that I could not come; and such has been I am afraid, the state of my body, that it would not well have seconded my inclination. My body, I think, grows better, and I refer my hopes to another year; for I am very sincere in my design to pay the visit, and take the ramble. In the meantime, do not omit any opportunity of keeping up a favourable opinion of me in the minds of any of my friends. Beattie's book is, I believe, every day more liked; at least I like it more, as I look more upon it.

"I am glad if you got credit by your cause, and am yet of opinion, that our cause was good, and that the determination ought to have been in your favour. Poor Hastie, I think, had but his deserts.

"You promised to get me a little 'Pindar;' you may add to it a little 'Anacreon.'

"The leisure which I cannot enjoy, it will be a pleasure to hear that you employ upon the antiquities of the feudal establishment. The whole system of ancient tenures is gradually passing away; and I wish to have the knowledge of it preserved adequate and complete. For such an institution makes a very important part of the history of mankind. Do not forget a design so worthy of a scholar who studies the law of his country, and of a gentleman who may naturally be curious to know the condition of his own ancestors.

"I am, dear Sir, yours with great affection,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO DR. JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR,

Edinburgh, Dec. 25, 1772.

"I was much disappointed that you did not come to Scotland last autumn. However, I must own that your letter prevents me from complaining; not only

because I am sensible that the state of your health was but too good an excuse, but because you write in a strain which shows that you have agreeable views of the scheme which we have so long proposed,

\* \* \* \* \*

“I communicated to Beattie what you said of his book in your last letter to me. He writes to me thus: ‘You judge very rightly in supposing that Dr. Johnson’s favourable opinion of my book must give me great delight. Indeed it is impossible for me to say how much I am gratified by it; for there is not a man upon earth whose good opinion I would be more ambitious to cultivate. His talents and his virtues I reverence more than any words can express. The extraordinary civilities, (the paternal attentions I should rather say,) and the many instructions I have had the honour to receive from him, will to me be a perpetual source of pleasure in the recollection,

*Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos reget artus.’*

“I had still some thoughts, while the summer lasted, of being obliged to go to London on some little business; otherwise I should certainly have troubled him with a letter several months ago, and given some vent to my gratitude and admiration. This I intend to do, as soon as I am left a little at leisure. Meantime, if you have occasion to write to him, I beg you will offer him my most respectful compliments, and assure him of the sincerity of my attachment and the warmth of my gratitude.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I am, &c.,

“JAMES BOSWELL.”



GEORGE STEEVENS

## CHAPTER VI.—1773.

NEW EDITIONS OF "THE DICTIONARY" AND "SHAKSPEARE" PUBLISHED—GEORGE STEEVENS—LETTER TO BOSWELL, WHO RE-VISITS LONDON—GOLDSMITH'S COMEDY, "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER"—"THE SPECTATOR"—GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER SUNDAY—A DINNER AT JOHNSON'S HOUSE—THE STUARTS—LAW REPORTS—SIGNOR MARTINELLI—ALLAN RAMSAY'S "GENTLE SHEPHERD"—CHARLES TOWNSHEND—JOHNSON DOUBTS THE PRACTICABILITY OF SHORT-HAND REPORTING—HIS DEFENCE OF DUELLING—VANITY OF GARRICK—SAVAGE LIFE—SUICIDE—EUSTACE BUDGELL—THE DOUGLAS CAUSE.

IN 1773, his only publication was an edition of his folio Dictionary with additions and corrections; nor did he, so far as is known, furnish any productions of his fertile pen to any of his numerous friends or dependents, except the preface<sup>1</sup> to his old amanuensis Macbean's "Dictionary of Ancient Geography." His Shakspeare, indeed, which had been received with high approbation by the public, and gone through several editions, was this year re-published by George Steevens, Esq., a gentleman not only deeply skilled in ancient learning, and of very extensive reading in English literature, especially the early writers, but at the same time of acute discernment and elegant taste. It is almost unnecessary to say that, by his great and valuable additions to Dr. Johnson's work, he justly obtained considerable reputation:

*"Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet."*

<sup>1</sup> He, however, wrote, or partly wrote, an Epitaph on Mrs. Bell, wife of his friend John Bell, Esq., brother of the Rev. Dr. Bell, Prebendary of Westminster, which is printed in his works. It is in English prose, and has so little of his manner, that I did not believe he had any hand in it, till I was satisfied of the fact by the authority of Mr. Bell.—BOSWELL.

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

*London, Feb. 22, 1773.*

“ I have read your kind letter much more than the elegant Pindar which it accompanied. I am always glad to find myself not forgotten; and to be forgotten by you would give me great uneasiness. My northern friends have never been unkind to me; I have from you, dear Sir, testimonies of affection, which I have not often been able to excite; and Dr. Beattie rates the testimony which I was desirous of paying to his merit, much higher than I should have thought it reasonable to expect.

“ I have heard of your masquerade.<sup>1</sup> What says your synod to such innovations? I am not studiously scrupulous, nor do I think a masquerade either evil in itself, or very likely to be the occasion of evil; yet, as the world thinks it a very licentious relaxation of manners, I would not have been one of the first masquers in a country where no masquerade had ever been before.<sup>2</sup>

“ A new edition of my great Dictionary is printed, from a copy which I was persuaded to revise; but having made no preparation, I was able to do very little. Some superfluities I have expunged, and some faults I have corrected, and here and there have scattered a remark; but the main fabric of the work remains as it was. I have looked very little into it since I wrote it, and, I think, I found it full as often better, as worse, than I expected.

“ Baretti and Davies have had a furious quarrel; a quarrel, I think, irreconcilable. Dr. Goldsmith has a new comedy, which is expected in the spring. No name is yet given it. The chief diversion arises from a stratagem by which a lover is made to mistake his future father-in-law's house for an inn. This, you see, borders upon farce. The dialogue is quick and gay, and the incidents are so prepared as not to seem improbable.

“ I am sorry that you lost your cause of intromission, because I yet think the arguments on your side unanswerable. But you seem, I think, to say, that you gained reputation even by your defeat; and reputation you will daily gain, if you keep Lord Auchinleck's precept in your mind, and endeavour to consolidate in your mind a firm and regular system of law, instead of picking up occasional fragments.

“ My health seems in general to improve; but I have been troubled for many weeks with a vexatious catarrh, which is sometimes sufficiently distressful. I have not found any great effects from bleeding and physic; and am afraid, that I must expect help from brighter days and softer air.

“ Write to me now and then; and whenever any good befalls you, make haste to let me know it, for no one will rejoice at it more than, dear Sir,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ You continue to stand very high in the favour of Mrs. Thrale.”

While a former edition of my work was passing through the press, I was unexpectedly favoured with a packet from Philadelphia, from Mr. James Abercrombie, a gentleman of that country, who is pleased to

<sup>1</sup> Given by a lady at Edinburgh.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> There had been masquerades in Scotland; but not for a very long time.—BOSWELL.



honour me with very high praise of my "Life of Dr. Johnson." To have the fame of my illustrious friend, and his faithful biographer, echoed from the New World, is extremely flattering; and my grateful acknowledgments shall be wafted across the Atlantic. Mr. Abercrombie has politely conferred on me a considerable additional obligation, by transmitting to me copies of two letters from Dr. Johnson to American gentlemen. "Gladly, Sir," says he, "would I have sent you the originals; but being the only relics of the kind in America, they are considered by the possessors of such inestimable value, that no possible consideration would induce them to part with them. In some future publication of yours relative to that great and good man, they may perhaps be thought worthy of insertion."

"TO MR. B———D.<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,

*London, Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, March 4, 1773.*

"That in the hurry of a sudden departure you should yet find leisure to consult my convenience, is a degree of kindness, and an instance of regard, not only beyond my claims, but above my expectation. You are not mistaken in supposing that I set a high value on my American friends, and that you should confer a very valuable favour upon me by giving me an opportunity of keeping myself in their memory.

"I have taken the liberty of troubling you with a packet, to which I wish a safe and speedy conveyance, because I wish a safe and speedy voyage to him that conveys it. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO THE REV. MR. WHITE.

"DEAR SIR,

*Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, London, March 4, 1773.*

"Your kindness for your friends accompanies you across the Atlantic. It was long since observed by Horace, that no ship could leave care behind: you have been attended in your voyage by other powers,—by benevolence and constancy: and I hope care did not often show her face in their company.

"I received the copy of *Rasselas*. The impression is not magnificent, but it flatters an author, because the printer seems to have expected that it would be scattered among the people. The little book has been well received, and is translated into Italian, French, German and Dutch. It has now one honour more by an American edition.

"I know not that much has happened since your departure that can engage your curiosity. Of all public transactions the whole world is now informed by the newspapers. Opposition seems to despond; and the dissenters, though

<sup>1</sup> This gentleman, who now resides in America in a public character of considerable dignity, desired that his name might not be transcribed at full length.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Now Doctor White, and Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania. During his first visit to England in 1771, as a candidate for holy orders, he was several times in company with Dr. Johnson, who expressed a wish to see the edition of *Rasselas*, which Dr. White told him had been printed in America. Dr. White, on his return, immediately sent him a copy.—BOSWELL.

they have taken advantage of unsettled times, and a government much enfeebled, seem not likely to gain any immunities.

“Dr. Goldsmith has a new comedy in rehearsal at Covent-garden, to which the manager predicts ill success. I hope he will be mistaken. I think it deserves a very kind reception.

“I shall soon publish a new edition of my large Dictionary: I have been persuaded to revise it, and have mended some faults, but added little to its usefulness.

“No book has been published since your departure, of which much notice is taken. Faction only fills the town with pamphlets, and greater subjects are forgotten in the noise of discord.

“Thus have I written, only to tell you how little I have to tell. Of myself I can only add, that having been afflicted many weeks with a very troublesome cough, I am now recovered.

“I take the liberty which you give me of troubling you with a letter, of which you will be pleased to fill up the direction, I am, Sir,

“Your most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

On Saturday, April 3, the day after my arrival in London this year, I went to his house late in the evening, and sat with Mrs. Williams till he came home. I found in “The London Chronicle,” Dr. Goldsmith’s apology to the public for beating Evans, a bookseller, on account of a paragraph<sup>1</sup> in a newspaper published by him, which Goldsmith thought impertinent to him and to a lady of his acquaintance. The apology was written so much in Dr. Johnson’s manner, that both Mrs. Williams and I supposed it to be his; but when he came home he soon undeceived us. When he said to Mrs. Williams, “Well, Dr. Goldsmith’s *manifesto* has got into your paper;” I asked him if Dr. Goldsmith had written it, with an air that made him see I suspected it was his, though subscribed by Goldsmith. JOHNSON: “Sir, Dr. Goldsmith would no more have asked me to write such a thing as that for him than he would have asked me to feed him with a spoon, or to do anything else that denoted his imbecility. I as much believe that he wrote it as if I had seen him do it. Sir, had he shown it to any one friend, he would not have been allowed to publish it. He has, indeed, done it very well; but it is a foolish thing well done. I suppose he has been so much elated with the success of his new comedy that he has thought everything that concerned him must be of importance to the public.” BOSWELL: “I fancy, Sir, this is the first time that he has been engaged in such an adventure.” JOHNSON: “Why, Sir, I believe it is the first time he has *beat*; he may have *been beaten* before. This, Sir, is a new plume to him.”

I mentioned Sir John Dalrymple’s “Memoirs of Great Britain and

<sup>1</sup> The offence given, was a long abusive letter in “The London Packet.” A particular account of this transaction, and Goldsmith’s Vindication (for such it was, rather than an apology), may be found in the new Life of that Poet, prefixed to his Miscellaneous Works in 4 vols. 8vo. pp. 105—108.—MALONE.

Ireland," and his discoveries to the prejudice of Lord Russell and Algon Sydney. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, every body who had just notions of government thought them rascals before. It is well that all mankind now see them to be rascals." BOSWELL: "But, Sir, may not those discoveries be true without their being rascals." JOHNSON: "Consider, Sir, would any of them have been willing to have had it known that they intrigued with France? Depend upon it, Sir, he who does what he is afraid should be known, has something rotten about him. This Dalrymple seems to be an honest fellow; for he tells equally what makes against both sides. But nothing can be poorer than his mode of writing; it is the mere bouncing of a schoolboy! great he!<sup>1</sup> but greater she! and such stuff."

I could not agree with him in this criticism: for though Sir John Dalrymple's style is not regularly formed in any respect, and one cannot help smiling sometimes at his affected *grandiloquence*, there is in his writing a pointed vivacity, and much of a gentlemanly spirit.

At Mr. Thrale's, in the evening, he repeated his usual paradoxical declamation against action in public speaking. "Action can have no effect upon reasonable minds. It may augment noise, but it never can enforce argument. If you speak to a dog, you use action: you hold up your hand thus, because he is a brute; and in proportion as men are removed from brutes, action will have the less influence upon them." MRS. THRALE: "What then, Sir, becomes of Demosthenes' saying? 'Action, action, action!'" JOHNSON: "Demosthenes, Madam, spoke to an assembly of brutes; to a barbarous people."

I thought it extraordinary, that he should deny the power of rhetorical action upon human nature, when it is proved by innumerable facts in all stages of society. Reasonable beings are not solely reasonable. They have fancies which may be pleased, passions which may be roused.

Lord Chesterfield being mentioned, Johnson remarked, that almost all of that celebrated nobleman's witty sayings were puns. He, however, allowed the merit of good wit to his Lordship's saying of Lord Tyrawley and himself, when both very old and infirm: "Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years; but we don't choose to have it known."

He talked with approbation of an intended edition of "The Spectator," with notes; two volumes of which had been prepared by a gentleman eminent in the literary world, and the materials which he had collected for the remainder had been transferred to another hand. He observed, that all works which describe manners, require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less; and told us, he had communicated all he knew that could throw light upon "The Spectator." He said, "Addison had made his Sir Andrew Freeport a true Whig, arguing against giving charity to beggars, and throwing out other such ungracious sentiments;

<sup>1</sup> A bombastic ode of Oldham's on Ben Jonson begins thus: "Great thou!" which perhaps his namesake remembered.—MALONE.

but that he had thought better, and made amends by making him found an hospital for decayed farmers." He called for the volume of "The Spectator," in which that account is contained, and read it aloud to us. He read so well, that everything acquired additional weight and grace from his utterance.

The conversation having turned on modern imitations of ancient ballads, and some one having praised their simplicity, he treated them with that ridicule which he always displayed when that subject was mentioned.

He disapproved of introducing scripture phrases into secular discourse. This seemed to me a question of some difficulty. A scripture expression may be used like a highly classical phrase, to produce an instantaneous strong expression; and it may be done without being at all improper. Yet I own there is danger, that applying the language of our sacred book to ordinary subjects may tend to lessen our reverence for it. If therefore it be introduced at all, it should be with very great caution.

On Thursday, April 8, I sat a good part of the evening with him, but he was very silent. He said "Burnet's 'History of his own Times,' is very entertaining. The style, indeed, is mere chit-chat. I do not believe that Burnet intentionally lied; but he was so much prejudiced that he took no pains to find out the truth. He was like a man who resolves to regulate his time by a certain watch but will not inquire whether the watch is right or not."

Though he was not disposed to talk, he was unwilling that I should leave him: and when I looked at my watch, and told him it was twelve o'clock, he cried, "What's that to you and me?" and ordered Frank to tell Mrs. Williams that we were coming to drink tea with her, which we did. It was settled that we should go to church together next day.

On the 9th of April, being Good Friday, I breakfasted with him on tea and cross buns; *Doctor* Levet, as Frank called him, making the tea. He carried me with him to the church of St. Clement Danes, where he had his seat;<sup>1</sup> and his behaviour was, as I had imagined to myself, solemnly devout. I never shall forget the tremulous earnestness with which he pronounced the awful petition in the Litany: "In the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, good LORD deliver us."

<sup>1</sup> The Churchwardens of St. Clement Danes, having satisfactorily ascertained that a seat in the pew numbered 18, in the north gallery of that church, was regularly occupied for many years by the great moralist, have, during the progress of this Edition, caused a neat brass tablet recording the fact to be affixed in a conspicuous position to the pillar against which the Doctor must often have reclined. The inscription on the tablet is understood to be from the pen of Dr. Croly, rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, and is as follows:—"In this pew and beside this pillar, for many years attended divine service the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, the philosopher, the poet, the great lexicographer, the profound moralist, and chief writer of his time. Born 1709; died 1784. In the remembrance and honour of noble faculties, nobly employed, some inhabitants of the parish of St. Clement Danes have placed this slight memorial, A.D. 1851."—ED.

We went to church both in the morning and evening. In the interval between the two services we did not dine; but he read in the Greek New Testament, and I turned over several of his books.



JOHNSON AT ST. CLEMENT DANES CHURCH.

In Archbishop Laud's Diary, I found the following passage, which I read to Dr. Johnson:

"1623, February 1, Sunday. I stood by the most Illustrious Prince Charles,<sup>1</sup> at dinner. He was then very merry, and talked occasionally of many things with his attendants. Among other things, he said, that if he were necessitated to take any particular profession of life, he could not be a lawyer, adding his reason: 'I cannot,' said he, 'defend a bad, nor yield in a good cause.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, this is false reasoning; because every cause has a bad side: and a lawyer is not overcome, though the cause which he has endeavoured to support be determined against him.'"

I told him that Goldsmith had said to me a few days before, "As I take my shoes from the shoemaker, and my coat from the tailor, so I take my religion from the priest." I regretted this loose way of talking. JOHNSON: "Sir, he knows nothing; he has made up his mind about nothing."

To my great surprise he asked me to dine with him on Easter-day. I never supposed that he had a dinner at his house; for I had not then heard of any one of his friends having been entertained at his table. He

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Charles I.—BOSWELL.

told me, "I have generally a meat-pie on Sunday; it is baked at a public oven, which is very properly allowed, because one man can attend it; and thus the advantage is obtained of not keeping servants from church to dress dinners."

April 11, being Easter Sunday, after having attended Divine Service at St. Paul's, I repaired to Dr. Johnson's. I had gratified my curiosity much in dining with Jean Jaques Rousseau, while he lived in the wilds of Neuchâtel: I had as great a curiosity to dine with Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the dusky recess of a court in Fleet-street. I supposed we should scarcely have knives and forks, and only some strange, uncouth, ill-dressed dish; but I found everything in very good order. We had no other company but Mrs. Williams and a young woman whom I did not know. As a dinner here was considered as a singular phenomenon, and as I was frequently interrogated on the subject, my readers may perhaps be desirous to know our bill of fare. Foote, I remember, in allusion to Francis, the *negro*, was willing to suppose that our repast was *black broth*. But the fact was that we had a very good soup, a boiled leg of lamb and spinach, a veal pie, and a rice pudding.

Of Dr. John Campbell, the author, he said, "He is a very inquisitive and a very able man, and a man of good religious principles, though I am afraid he has been deficient in practice. Campbell is radically right; and we may hope that in time there will be good practice."

He owned that he thought Hawkesworth was one of his imitators, but he did not think Goldsmith was. Goldsmith, he said, had great merit. BOSWELL: "But, Sir, he is much indebted to you for his getting so high in public estimation." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, he has, perhaps, got *sooner* to it by his intimacy with me."

Goldsmith, though his vanity often excited him to occasional competition, had a very high regard for Johnson, which he had at this time expressed in the strongest manner in the Dedication of his comedy, entitled, "She Stoops to Conquer."<sup>1</sup>

Johnson observed, that there were very few books printed in Scotland before the Union. He had seen a complete collection of them in the possession of the Hon. Archibald Campbell, a nonjuring bishop.<sup>2</sup> I wish this collection had been kept entire. Many of them are in the library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh. I told Dr. Johnson that I had some intention to write the life of the learned and worthy Thomas Ruddiman. He said, "I should take pleasure in helping you to do honour to him. But his farewell letter to the faculty of Advocates,

<sup>1</sup> By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honour to inform the public, that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> See an account of this learned and respectable gentleman, and of his curious work on the *Middle State*, "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides" 3rd edit. p. 371.—BOSWELL.

when he resigned the office of their librarian, should have been in Latin."

I put a question to him upon a fact in common life, which he could not answer, nor have I found any one else who could. "What is the reason that women servants, though obliged to be at the expense of purchasing their own clothes, have much lower wages than men servants, to whom a great proportion of that article is furnished, and when in fact our female house servants work much harder than the male?"

He told me that he had twelve or fourteen times attempted to keep a journal of his life, but never could persevere. He advised me to do it. "The great thing to be recorded," said he, "is the state of your own mind; and you should write down everything that you remember, for you cannot judge at first what is good or bad; and write immediately, while the impression is fresh, for it will not be the same a week afterwards."

I again solicited him to communicate to me the particulars of his early life. He said, "You shall have them all for twopence. I hope you shall know a great deal more of me before you write my life." He mentioned to me this day many circumstances, which I wrote down when I went home, and have interwoven in the former part of this narrative.

On Tuesday, April 13, he and Dr. Goldsmith and I dined at General Oglethorpe's. Goldsmith expatiated on the common topic, that the race of our people was degenerated, and this was owing to luxury. JOHNSON: "Sir, in the first place I doubt the fact. I believe there are as many tall men in England now, as ever there were. But, secondly, supposing the stature of our people to be diminished, that is not owing to luxury; for, Sir, consider to how very small a proportion of our people luxury can reach. Our soldiery, surely, are not luxurious, who live on sixpence a day; and the same remark will apply to almost all the other classes. Luxury, so far as it reaches the poor, will do good to the race of people; it will strengthen and multiply them. Sir, no nation was ever hurt by luxury; for, as I said before, it can reach but to a very few. I admit that the great increase of commerce and manufactures hurts the military spirit of a people; because it produces a competition for something else than martial honours—a competition for riches. It also hurts the bodies of the people: for you will observe, there is no man who works at any particular trade, but you may know him from his appearance to do so. One part or the other of his body being more used than the rest, he is in some degree deformed: but, Sir, that is not luxury. A tailor sits crossed-legged: but that is not luxury." GOLDSMITH: "Come, you're just going to the same place by another road." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, I say that is not *luxury*. Let us take a walk from Charing-cross to Whitechapel, through, I suppose, the

greatest series of shops in the world, what is there in any of these shops (if you except gin-shops), that can do any human being any harm?" GOLDSMITH: "Well, Sir, I'll accept your challenge. The very next shop to Northumberland-house is a pickle-shop." JOHNSON: "Well, Sir; do we not know that a maid can in one afternoon make pickles sufficient to serve a whole family for a year? nay, that five pickle-shops can serve all the kingdom? Besides, Sir, there is no harm done to any body by the making of pickles or the eating of pickles."

We drank tea with the ladies; and Goldsmith sung Tony Lumpkin's song in his comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," and a very pretty one, to an Irish tune,<sup>1</sup> which he had designed for Miss Harcastle; but as Mrs. Bulkeley, who played the part, could not sing, it was left out. He afterwards wrote it down for me, by which means it was preserved, and now appears amongst his poems. Dr. Johnson, in his way home, stopped at my lodgings in Piccadilly, and sat with me, drinking tea a second time, till a late hour.

I told him that Mrs. Macaulay said, she wondered how he could reconcile his political principles with his moral: his notions of inequality and subordination with wishing well to the happiness of all mankind who might live so agreeably, had they all their portions of land, and none to domineer over another. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, I reconcile my principles very well, because mankind are happier in a state of inequality and subordination. Were they to be in this pretty state of equality, they would soon degenerate into brutes;—they would become Monboddó's nation:—their tails would grow. Sir, all would be losers, were all to work for all: they would have no intellectual improvement. All intellectual improvement arises from leisure; all leisure arises from one working for another."

Talking of the family of Stuart, he said, "It should seem that the family at present on the throne has now established as good a right as the former family, by the long consent of the people; and that to disturb this right might be considered as culpable. At the same time I own, that it is a very difficult question, when considered with respect to the house of Stuart. To oblige people to take oaths as to the disputed right, is wrong. I know not whether I could take them: but I do not blame those who do." So conscientious and so delicate was he upon this subject, which has occasioned so much clamour against him.

Talking of law cases, he said, "The English reports, in general, are very poor: only the half of what has been said is taken down; and of that half, much is mistaken. Whereas, in Scotland, the arguments on each side are deliberately put in writing, to be considered by the court. I think a collection of your cases upon subjects of importance, with the opinions of the judges upon them, would be valuable."

<sup>1</sup> The "Humours of Ballamagairy."—BOSWELL.



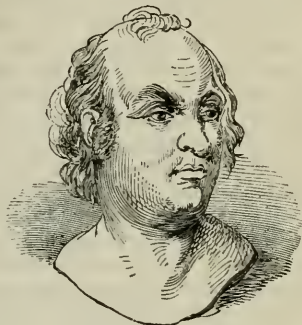
On Thursday, April 15, I dined with him and Dr. Goldsmith at General Paoli's. We found here Signor Martinelli, of Florence, author of a History of England in Italian, printed at London.

I spoke of Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," in the Scottish dialect, as the best pastoral that had ever been written; not only abounding with beautiful rural imagery, and just and pleasing sentiments, but being a real picture of manners; and I offered to teach Dr. Johnson to understand it. "No, Sir," said he, "I won't learn it. You shall retain your superiority by my not knowing it."

This brought on a question whether one man is lessened by another's acquiring an equal degree of knowledge with him. Johnson asserted the affirmative. I maintained that the position might be true in those kinds of knowledge which produce wisdom, power, and force, so as to enable one man to have the government of others; but that a man is not in any degree lessened by others knowing as well as he what ends in mere pleasure:—eating fine fruit, drinking delicious wines, reading exquisite poetry.

The General observed, that Martinelli was a Whig. JOHNSON: "I am sorry for it. It shows the spirit of the times: he is obliged to temporise." BOSWELL: "I rather think, Sir, that Toryism prevails in this reign." JOHNSON: "I know not why you should think so, Sir. You see your friend Lord Lyttelton, a nobleman, is obliged in his History to write the most vulgar Whiggism."

An animated debate took place whether Martinelli should continue his History of England to the present day. GOLDSMITH: "To be sure he should." JOHNSON: "No, Sir; he would give great offence. He would have to tell of almost all the living great what they do not wish told." GOLDSMITH: "It may, perhaps, be necessary for a native to be more cautious; but a foreigner who comes among us without prejudice, may be considered as holding the place of a judge, and may speak his mind freely." JOHNSON: "Sir, a foreigner, when he sends a work from the press, ought to be on his guard against catching the error and mistaken enthusiasm of the people among whom he happens to be." GOLDSMITH: "Sir, he wants only to sell his history, and to tell truth; one an honest, the other a laudable motive." JOHNSON: "Sir, they are both laudable motives. It is laudable in a man to wish to live by his labours; but he should write so as he may *live* by them, not so as he may be knocked on the head. I would advise him to be at Calais



SIGNOR MARTINELLI.

before he publishes his history of the present age. A foreigner who attaches himself to a political party in this country, is in the worst state that can be imagined: he is looked upon as a mere intermeddler. A native may do it from interest." BOSWELL: "Or principle." GOLDSMITH: "There are people who tell a hundred political lies every day, and are not hurt by it. Surely, then, one may tell truth with safety." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, in the first place, he who tells a hundred lies has disarmed the force of his lies. But besides, a man had rather have a hundred lies told of him, than one truth which he does not wish should be told." GOLDSMITH: "For my part, I'd tell truth, and shame the devil." JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir; but the devil will be angry. I wish to shame the devil as much as you do, but I should choose to be out of the reach of his claws." GOLDSMITH: "His claws can do you no harm, when you have the shield of truth."

It having been observed that there was little hospitality in London; JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing, will be very generally invited in London. The man, Sterne, I have been told, has had engagements for three months." GOLDSMITH: "And a very dull fellow." JOHNSON: "Why, no, Sir."

Martinelli told us, that for several years he lived much with Charles Townshend, and that he ventured to tell him he was a bad joker. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, thus much I can say upon the subject. One day he and a few more agreed to go and dine in the country, and each of them was to bring a friend in his carriage with him. Charles Townshend asked Fitzherbert to go with him, but told him, 'You must find somebody to bring you back: I can only carry you there.' Fitzherbert did not much like this arrangement. He, however, consented, observing sarcastically, 'It will do very well; for then the same jokes will serve you in returning as in going.'

An eminent public character being mentioned:—JOHNSON: "I remember being present when he showed himself to be so corrupted, or at least something so different from what I think right, as to maintain, that a member of parliament should go along with his party right or wrong. Now, Sir, this is so remote from native virtue, from scholastic virtue, that a good man must have undergone a great change before he can reconcile himself to such a doctrine. It is maintaining that you may lie to the public; for you lie when you call that right which you think wrong, or the reverse. A friend of ours who is too much an echo of that gentleman, observed, 'that a man who does not stick uniformly to a party is only waiting to be bought.' Why, then, said I, he is only waiting to be what that gentleman is already."

We talked of the King's coming to see Goldsmith's new play.—"I wish he would," said Goldsmith; adding, however, with an affected indifference, "Not that it would do me the least good." JOHNSON: "Well then, Sir let us say it would do *him* good (laughing). No, Sir,

this affectation will not pass: it is mighty idle. In such a state as ours who would not wish to please the chief magistrate?" GOLDSMITH: "I do wish to please him. I remember a line in Dryden,

'And every poet is the monarch's friend.'

It ought to be reversed." JOHNSON: "Nay, there are finer lines in Dryden on the subject:—

'For colleges on bounteous kings depend,  
And never rebel was to arts a friend.'

General Paoli observed, that successful rebels might. MARTINELLI: "Happy rebellions." GOLDSMITH: "We have no such phrase." GENERAL PAOLI: "But have you not the *thing*?" GOLDSMITH: "Yes, all our *happy* revolutions. They have hurt our constitution, and will hurt it, till we mend it by another HAPPY REVOLUTION." I never before discovered that my friend Goldsmith had so much of the old prejudice in him.

General Paoli, talking of Goldsmith's new play, said, "*Il a fait un compliment très gracieux à une certaine grande dame;*" meaning a duchess of the first rank.

I expressed a doubt whether Goldsmith intended it, in order that I might hear the truth of it from himself. It perhaps was not quite fair to endeavour to bring him to a confession, as he might not wish to avow positively his taking part against the Court. He smiled and hesitated. The General at once relieved him by this beautiful image: *Monsieur Goldsmith est comme la mer, qui jette des perles et beaucoup d'autres belles choses, sans s'en appercevoir.*" GOLDSMITH: "*Très bien dit, et très élégamment.*"

A person was mentioned who, it was said, could take down in short-hand the speeches in parliament with perfect exactness. JOHNSON: "Sir, it is impossible. I remember one Angel who came to me to write for him a preface or dedication to a book upon short-hand, and he professed to write as fast as a man could speak. In order to try him, I took down a book, and read while he wrote; and I favoured him, for I read more deliberately than usual. I had proceeded but a very little way, when he begged I would desist, for he could not follow me." Hearing now for the first time of this preface or dedication, I said, "What an expense, Sir, do you put us to in buying books, to which you have written prefaces or dedications." JOHNSON: "Why, I have dedicated to the royal family all round; that is to say, to the last generation of the royal family." GOLDSMITH: "And, perhaps, Sir, not one sentence of wit in a whole dedication." JOHNSON: "Perhaps not, Sir." BOSWELL: "What then is the reason for applying to a particular person to do that which any one may do as well?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, one man has a greater readiness at doing it than another."

I spoke of Mr. Harris,<sup>1</sup> of Salisbury, as being a very learned man, and in particular an eminent Grecian. JOHNSON: "I am not sure of that. His friends gave him out as such, but I know not who of his friends are able to judge of it." GOLDSMITH: "He is what is much better: he is a worthy humane man." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, that is not to the purpose of our argument: that will as much prove that he can play the fiddle as well as Giardini, as that he is an eminent Grecian." GOLDSMITH: "The greatest musical performers have but small emoluments. Giardini, I am told, does not get above seven hundred a year." JOHNSON: "That is indeed but little for a man to get, who does best that which so many endeavour to do. There is nothing, I think, in which the power of art is shown so much as in playing on the fiddle. In all other things we can do something at first. Any man will forge a bar of iron if you give him a hammer; not so well as a smith, but tolerably. A man will saw a piece of wood, and make a box, though a clumsy one; but give him a fiddle and a fiddlestick, and he can do nothing."

On Monday, April 19, he called on me with Mrs. Williams, in Mr. Strahan's coach, and carried me out to dine with Mr. Elphinston, at his Academy at Kensington. A printer having acquired a fortune sufficient to keep his coach was a good topic for the credit of literature. Mrs. Williams said that another printer, Mr. Hamilton, had not waited so long as Mr. Strahan, but had kept his coach several years sooner. JOHNSON: "He was in the right. Life is short. The sooner that a man begins to enjoy his wealth the better."

Mr. Elphinston talked of a new book that was much admired, and asked Dr. Johnson if he had read it. JOHNSON: "I have looked into it." "What," said Elphinston, "have you not read it through?" JOHNSON (offended at being thus pressed, and so obliged to own his cursory mode of reading, answered tartly): "No, Sir; do *you* read books *through*?"

He this day again defended duelling, and put his argument upon what I have ever thought the most solid basis: that if public war be allowed to be consistent with morality, private war must be equally so. Indeed, we may observe what strained arguments are used to reconcile war with the Christian religion. But, in my opinion, it is exceedingly clear that duelling having better reasons for its barbarous violence, is more justifiable than war in which thousands go forth without any cause of personal quarrel, and massacre each other.

On Wednesday, April 21, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's. A gentleman attacked Garrick for being vain. JOHNSON: "No wonder, Sir, that he is vain; a man who is perpetually flattered in every mode that can be conceived. So many bellows have blown the fire, that one

<sup>1</sup> Author of "Hermes, or a Philosophical Enquiry concerning Universal Grammar," a work displaying much ingenuity and an extensive acquaintance with the writings of the Greek poets and philosophers.—Ed.

wonders he has not by this time become a cinder." BOSWELL: "And such bellows, too. Lord Mansfield with his cheeks like to burst. Lord Chatham like an Æolus. I have read such notes from them to him as were enough to turn his head." JOHNSON: "True. When he whom everybody else flatters, flatters me, I then am truly happy." MRS. THRALE: "The sentiment is in Congreve, I think." JOHNSON: "Yes, Madam, in 'The Way of the World':—

'If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see  
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me.'

No, Sir, I should not be surprised though Garrick chained the ocean and lashed the winds." BOSWELL: "Should it not be, Sir, lashed the ocean and chained the winds?" JOHNSON: "No, Sir, recollect the original—

'In Corum atque Eurum solitus scœvire flagellis  
Barbarus, Æolio nunquam hoc in carcere passos,  
Ipsum compedibus qui vinxerat Ennosigæum.'<sup>1</sup>

This does very well when both the winds and the sea are personified, and mentioned by their mythological names, as in Juvenal; but when they are mentioned in plain language, the application of the epithets suggested by me is the most obvious; and accordingly, my friend himself in his imitation of the passage which describes Xerxes, has

"The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind."<sup>2</sup>

The modes of living in different countries, and the various views with which men travel in quest of new scenes, having been talked of, a learned gentleman who holds a considerable office in the law, expatiated on the happiness of a savage life, and mentioned an instance of an officer who had actually lived for some time in the wilds of America, of whom, when in that state, he quoted this reflection, with an air of admiration, as if it had been deeply philosophical: "Here am I, free and unrestrained, amidst the rude magnificence of Nature, with this Indian woman by my side, and this gun, with which I can procure food when I want it: what more can be desired for human happiness?" It did not require much sagacity to foresee that such a sentiment would not be permitted to pass without due animadversion. JOHNSON: "Do not allow yourself, Sir, to be imposed upon by such gross absurdity. It is sad stuff; it is brutish. If a bull could speak, he might as well exclaim,—Here am I with this cow and this grass; what being can enjoy greater felicity?"

<sup>1</sup> "The proud barbarian, whose impatient ire  
Chastised the winds that disobeyed his nod,  
With stripes ne'er suffered from the Æolian God,  
Fetter'd the Shaker of the sea and land."—*JUV. X. 182.*—GIFFORD

<sup>2</sup> So also Butler, *Hudibras*, p. ii. c. i. v. 845.

"A Persian Emperor *whipt* his grannam,  
The *sea* his mother Venus came on."—MALONE.

We talked of the melancholy end of a gentleman who had destroyed himself. JOHNSON: "It was owing to imaginary difficulties in his affairs, which, had he talked of with any friend, would soon have vanished." BOSWELL: "Do you think, Sir, that all who commit suicide are mad?" JOHNSON: "Sir, they are often not universally disordered in their intellects, but one passion presses so upon them, that they yield to it, and commit suicide, as a passionate man will stab another." He added, "I have often thought, that after a man has taken the resolution to kill himself, it is not courage in him to do anything, however desperate, because he has nothing to fear." GOLDSMITH: "I don't see that." JOHNSON: "Nay, but my dear Sir, why should not you see what every one else sees?" GOLDSMITH: "It is for fear of something that he has resolved to kill himself: and will not that timid disposition restrain him?" JOHNSON: "It does not signify that the fear of something made him resolve; it is upon the state of his mind after the resolution is taken that I argue. Suppose a man, either from fear, or pride, or conscience, or whatever motive, has resolved to kill himself; when once the resolution is taken, he has nothing to fear. He may then go and take the King of Prussia by the nose, at the head of his army. He cannot fear the rack, who is resolved to kill himself. When Eustace Budgel was walking down to the Thames, determined to drown himself, he might, if he pleased, without any apprehension of danger, have turned aside, and first set fire to St. James's Palace."

On Tuesday, April 27, Mr. Beauclerk and I called on him in the morning. As we walked up Johnson's-court, I said, "I have a veneration for this court;" and was glad to find that Beauclerk had the same reverential enthusiasm. We found him alone. We talked of Sir Andrew Stuart's elegant and plausible letters to Lord Mansfield; a copy of which had been sent by the author to Dr. Johnson. JOHNSON: "They have not answered the end. They have not been talked of; I have never heard of them. This is owing to their not being sold. People seldom read a book which is given to them; and few are given. The way to spread a work is to sell it at a low price. No man will send to buy a thing that costs even sixpence without an intention to read it." BOSWELL: "May it not be doubted, Sir, whether it be proper to publish letters, arraigning the ultimate decision of an important cause by the supreme judicature of the nation?" JOHNSON: "No, Sir, I do not think it was wrong to publish these letters. If they are thought to do harm, why not answer them? But they will do no harm, if Mr. Douglas be indeed the son of Lady Jane he cannot be hurt; if he be not her son, and yet has the great estate of the family of Douglas, he may well submit to have a pamphlet against him by Andrew Stuart. Sir, I think such a publication does good, as it does good to show us the possibilities of human life. And, Sir, you will not say that the Douglas cause was a cause of easy decision, when it divided your court as much as it could

do, to be determined at all. When your judges are seven and seven, the casting vote of the president must be given on one side or other no matter, for my argument, on which ; one or the other *must* be taken ; as when I am to move, there is no matter which leg I move first. And then, Sir, it was otherwise determined here. No, Sir, a more dubious determination of any question cannot be imagined.”<sup>1</sup>

He said, “Goldsmith should not be for ever attempting to shine in conversation : he has not temper for it, he is so much mortified when he fails. Sir, a game of jokes is composed partly of skill, partly of chance, a man may be beat at times by one who has not the tenth part of his wit. Now Goldsmith’s putting himself against another, is like a man laying a hundred to one who cannot spare the hundred. It is not worth a man’s while. A man should not lay a hundred to one, unless he can easily spare it, though he has a hundred chances for him : he can get but a guinea, and he may lose a hundred. Goldsmith is in this state. When he contends, if he gets the better, it is a very little addition to a man of his literary reputation : if he does not get the better, he is miserably vexed.”

Johnson’s own superlative powers of wit set him above any risk of such uneasiness. Garrick had remarked to me of him, a few days before, “Rabelais and all other wits are nothing compared with him. You may be diverted by them ; but Johnson gives you a forcible hug, and shakes laughter out of you whether you will or no.”

Goldsmith, however, was often very fortunate in his witty contests, even when he entered the lists with Johnson himself. Sir Joshua Reynolds was in company with them one day, when Goldsmith said, that he thought he could write a good fable, mentioned the simplicity which that kind of composition requires, and observed, that in most fables the animals introduced seldom talk in character. “For instance,” said he, “the fable of the little fishes, who saw birds fly over their heads, and envying them, petitioned Jupiter to be changed into birds. The skill,” continued he, “consists in making them talk like little fishes.” While he indulged himself in this fanciful reverie, he observed Johnson shaking his sides, and laughing. Upon which he smartly proceeded, “Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think ; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like WHALES.”

Johnson, though remarkable for his great variety of composition, never exercised his talents in fable, except we allow his beautiful tale published in Mrs. Williams’s Miscellanies to be of that species. I have,

<sup>1</sup> I regretted that Dr. Johnson never took the trouble to study a question which interested nations. He would not even read a pamphlet which I wrote upon it, entitled “The Essence of the Douglas Cause ;” which, I have reason to flatter myself, had considerable effect in favour of Mr. Douglas ; of whose legitimate filiation I was then, and am still, firmly convinced. Let me add, that no fact can be more respectably ascertained than by the judgment of the most august tribunal in the world ; a judgment in which Lord Mansfield and Lord Camden united in 1769, and from which only five of a numerous body entered a protest.—BOSWELL

however, found among his manuscript collections the following sketch of one :—

“Glow-worm<sup>1</sup> lying in the garden saw a candle in a neighbouring palace, and complained of the littleness of his own light. Another observed—Wait a little—soon dark,—have outlasted πολλ [many] of these glaring lights which are only brighter as they haste to nothing.”

On Thursday, April 29, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Dr. Goldsmith, and Mr. Thrale. I was very desirous to get Dr. Johnson absolutely fixed in his resolution to go with me to the Hebrides this year; and I told him that I had received a letter from Dr. Robertson, the historian, upon the subject, with which he was much pleased, and now talked in such a manner of his long intended tour, that I was satisfied he meant to fulfil his engagement.

The custom of eating dogs at Otaheite being mentioned, Goldsmith observed, that this was also a custom in China: that a dog-butcher is as common there as any other butcher; and that when he walks abroad all the dogs fall on him. JOHNSON: “That is not owing to his killing dogs, Sir. I remember a butcher at Lichfield, whom a dog that was in the house where I lived, always attacked. It is the smell of carnage which provokes this, let the animals he has killed be what they may.” GOLDSMITH: “Yes, there is a general abhorrence in animals at the signs of massacre. If you put a tub full of blood into a stable, the horses are like to go mad.” JOHNSON: “I doubt that.” GOLDSMITH: “Nay, Sir, it is a fact well authenticated.” THRALE: “You had better prove it before you put it into your book on natural history. You may do it in my stable if you will.” JOHNSON: “Nay, Sir, I would not have him prove it. If he is content to take his information from others, he may get through his book with little trouble, and without much endangering his reputation. But if he makes experiments for so comprehensive a book as his, there would be no end to them; his erroneous assertions would then fall upon himself; and he might be blamed for not having made experiments as to every particular.”

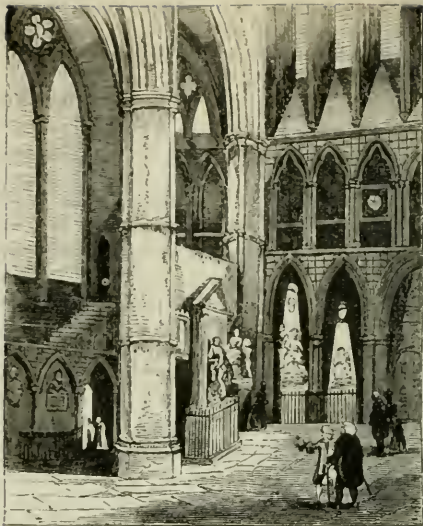
The character of Mallet having been introduced, and spoken of slightly by Goldsmith. JOHNSON: “Why, Sir, Mallet had talent enough to keep his literary reputation alive as long as he himself lived; and that, let me tell you, is a good deal.” GOLDSMITH: “But I cannot agree that it was so. His literary reputation was dead long before his natural death. I consider an author's literary reputation to be alive only while his name will ensure a good price for his copy from the book-sellers. I will get you (to Johnson), a hundred guineas for anything whatever that you shall write, if you put your name to it.”

<sup>1</sup> It has already been observed, that one of his first essays was a Latin poem on a glow-worm; but whether it be anywhere extant has not been ascertained.—MALONE.



Dr. Goldsmith's new play, "She Stoops to Conquer," being mentioned—JOHNSON: "I know of no comedy for many years that has so much exhilarated an audience, that has answered so much the great end of comedy—making an audience merry."

Goldsmith having said, that Garrick's compliment to the Queen, which he introduced into the play of "The Chances," which he had altered and revised this year, was mean and gross flattery. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, I would not *write*, I would not give solemnly under my hand, a character beyond what I thought really true; but a speech on the stage, let it flatter ever so extravagantly, is formular. It has always been formular to flatter kings and queens; so much so, that even in our church-service we have 'our most religious king,' used indiscriminately, whoever is king. Nay, they even flatter themselves—'we have been graciously pleased to grant.' No modern flattery, however, is so gross as that of the Augustan age, where the emperor was deified. '*Præsens Divus habebitur Augustus.*' And as to meanness (rising into warmth), how is it mean in a player—a showman—a fellow who exhibits himself for a shilling, to flatter his queen? The attempt, indeed, was dangerous; for if it had missed, what became of Garrick, and what became of the queen?" As Sir William Temple says of a great general, it is necessary not only that his designs be formed in a masterly manner, but that they should be attended with success. Sir, it is right, at a time when the royal family is not generally liked, to let it be seen that the people like at least one of them." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: "I do not perceive why the profession of a player should be despised; for the great and ultimate end of all the employments of mankind is to produce amusement. Garrick produces more amusement than any body." BOSWELL: "You say, Dr. Johnson, that Garrick exhibits himself for a shilling. In this respect he is only on a footing with a lawyer who exhibits himself for his fee, and even will maintain any nonsense or absurdity, if the case require it. Garrick refuses a play or a part which he does not like: a lawyer never refuses." JOHNSON: "Why Sir, what does this prove? only that a lawyer is worse. Boswell is now like Jack in the 'Tale of a Tub,' who, when he is puzzled by an argument, hangs himself. He thinks I shall cut him down, but I'll let him hang" (laughing vociferously). SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: "Mr. Boswell thinks that the profession of a lawyer being unquestionably honourable, if he can show the profession of a player to be more honourable, he proves his argument."



PORTS' CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

## CHAPTER VII.—1773.

DINNER AT BEAUCLEBK'S—JOHNSON CRITICISES GOLDSMITH'S ABILITIES AS A WRITER—  
 BOSWELL ELECTED A MEMBER OF "THE CLUB"—MONUMENTS TO EMINENT PERSONS—  
 "THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN"—JOHNSON'S OBSERVATIONS ON PUNNING—LAY PATRONAGE  
 —SOUTH SEA DISCOVERIES—REASONING OF BRUTES—TOLEBATION AND MARTYRDOM—  
 JOHNSON EXCITES THE ANGER OF GOLDSMITH—DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY—RECON-  
 CILIATION WITH "GOLDY"—LITERARY PROPERTY—LUDICROUS MERRIMENT OF JOHNSON.

ON Friday, April 30, I dined with him at Mr. Beauclerk's, where were Lord Charlemont, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and some more members of the LITERARY CLUB, whom he had obligingly invited to meet me, as I was this evening to be balloted for as candidate for admission into that distinguished society. Johnson had done me the honour to propose me, and Beauclerk was very zealous for me.

Goldsmith being mentioned, JOHNSON: "It is amazing how little Goldsmith knows. He seldom comes where he is not more ignorant than any one else." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: "Yet there is no man whose company is more liked." JOHNSON: "To be sure, Sir. When people find a man of the most distinguished abilities as a writer, their

inferior while he is with them, it must be highly gratifying to them. What Goldsmith comically says of himself is very true—he always gets the better when he argues alone; meaning, that he is master of a subject in his study, and can write well upon it; but when he comes into company, grows confused, and unable to talk. Take him as a poet, his ‘Traveller’ is a very fine performance; aye, and so is his ‘Deserted Village,’ were it not sometimes too much the echo of his ‘Traveller.’ Whether, indeed, we take him as a poet, as a comic writer, or as an historian, he stands in the first class.” BOSWELL: “An historian? My dear Sir, you surely will not rank his compilation of the Roman History with the works of other historians of this age?” JOHNSON: “Why, who are before him?” BOSWELL: “Hume, Robertson, Lord Lyttleton.” JOHNSON (his antipathy to the Scotch beginning to rise): “I have not read Hume; but, doubtless, Goldsmith’s history is better than the *verbiage* of Robertson, or the foppery of Dalrymple.” BOSWELL: “Will you not admit the superiority of Robertson, in whose history we find such penetration—such painting?” JOHNSON: “Sir, you must consider how that penetration and that painting are employed. It is not history, it is imagination. He who describes what he never saw, draws from fancy. Robertson paints minds as Sir Joshua paints faces in a history piece: he imagines an heroic countenance. You must look upon Robertson’s work as romance, and try it by that standard. History it is not. Besides, Sir, it is the great excellence of a writer to put into his book as much as his book will hold. Goldsmith has done this in his history. Now, Robertson might have put twice as much into his book. Robertson is like a man who has packed gold in wool; the wool takes up more room than the gold. No, Sir; I always thought Robertson would be crushed by his own weight—would be buried under his own ornaments. Goldsmith tells you shortly all you want to know: Robertson detains you a great deal too long. No man will read Robertson’s cumbrous detail a second time; but Goldsmith’s plain narrative will please again and again. I would say to Robertson what an old tutor of a college said to one of his pupils: ‘Read over your compositions, and wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.’ Goldsmith’s abridgment is better than that of Lucius Florus or Eutropius; and I will venture to say, that if you compare him with Vertot, in the same places of the Roman History, you will find that he excels Vertot. Sir, he has the art of compiling, and of saying every thing he has to say in a pleasing manner. He is now writing a Natural History, and he will make it as entertaining as a Persian Tale.”

I cannot dismiss the present topic without observing, that it is probable that Dr. Johnson, who owned that he often “talked for victory,” rather urged plausible objections to Dr. Robertson’s excellent historical works, in the ardour of contest, than expressed his real and

decided opinion; for it is not easy to suppose, that he should so widely differ from the rest of the literary world.

JOHNSON: "I remember once being with Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey. While we surveyed the Poets' Corner, I said to him,

'Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscbitur istis,<sup>1</sup>

When we got to Temple-bar, he stopped me, pointed to the heads upon it, and slyly whispered me,

'Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscbitur ISTIS.'"<sup>2</sup>

Johnson praised John Bunyan highly: "His 'Pilgrim's Progress' has great merit, both for invention, imagination, and the conduct of the story; and it has had the best evidence of its merit, the general and continued approbation of mankind. Few books, I believe, have had a more extensive sale. It is remarkable, that it begins very much like the poem of Dante; yet there was no translation of Dante when Bunyan wrote. There is reason to think that he had read Spenser."

A proposition which had been agitated, that monuments to eminent persons should, for the time to come, be erected in St. Paul's church as well as in Westminster Abbey, was mentioned; and it was asked who should be honoured by having his monument first erected there. Somebody suggested Pope. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, as Pope was a Roman Catholic, I would not have his to be first. I think Milton's rather should have the precedence.<sup>3</sup> I think more highly of him now than I did at twenty. There is more thinking in him and in Butler, than in any of our poets."

Some of the company expressed a wonder why the author of so excellent a book as "The Whole Duty of Man," should conceal himself.<sup>4</sup> JOHNSON: "There may be different reasons assigned for this, any one of which would be very sufficient. He may have been a clergyman, and may have thought that his religious counsels would have less weight when known to come from a man whose profession was theology. He may have been a man whose practice was not suitable to his principles, so that his character might injure the effect of his book, which he had written in a season of penitence. Or he may have been a man of rigid self-denial, so that he would have no reward for his pious labours while in this world, but refer it all to a future state."

The gentlemen went away to their club, and I was left at Beauclerk's

<sup>1</sup> Our name, perhaps, may be mixed with theirs.—OVID. de Art. Amand. i. iii. v. 13.

<sup>2</sup> In allusion to Dr. Johnson's supposed political principles, and perhaps his own.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> Here is another instance of his high admiration of Milton as a Poet, notwithstanding his just abhorrence of that sour Republican's political principles. His candour and discrimination are equally conspicuous. Let us hear no more of his "injustice to Milton."—BOSWELL.

<sup>4</sup> In a manuscript in the Bodleian Library several circumstances are stated which strongly incline me to believe that Dr. Accepted Frewen, Archbishop of York, was the author of this work.—MALONE

till the fate of my election should be announced to me. I sat in a state of anxiety which even the charming conversation of Lady Di Beauclerk could not entirely dissipate. In a short time I received the agreeable intelligence that I was chosen. I hastened to the place of meeting, and was introduced to such a society as can seldom be found. Mr. Edmund Burke, whom I then saw for the first time, and whose splendid talents had long made me ardently wish for his acquaintance; Dr. Nugent, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, and the company with whom I had dined. Upon my entrance, Johnson placed himself behind a chair, on which he leaned as on a desk or pulpit, and with humourous formality gave me a *Charge*, pointing out the conduct expected from me as a good member of this club.

Goldsmith produced some very absurd verses which had been publicly recited to an audience for money. JOHNSON: "I can match this nonsense. There was a poem called 'Eugenio,' which came out some years ago, and concludes thus:—

'And now, ye trifling, self-assuming elves,  
Brimful of pride, of nothing, of yourselves,  
Survey Eugenio, view him o'er and o'er,  
Then sink into yourselves, and be no more.'

Nay, Dryden, in his poem on the Royal Society, has these lines:—

'Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,  
And see the ocean leaning on the sky;  
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,  
And on the lunar world securely pry.'

Talking of puns, Johnson, who had a great contempt for that species of wit, deigned to allow that there was one good pun in "Menagiana" I think on the words *corps*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson's memory here was not perfectly accurate: "Eugenio" does not conclude thus. There are eight more lines after the last of those quoted by him; and the passage which he meant to recite is as follows:—

"Say now, ye fluttering, poor assuming elves,  
Stark full of pride, of folly, of—yourselves;  
Say, where's the wretch of all your impious crew  
Who dares confront his character to view?  
Behold Eugenio, view him o'er and o'er,  
Then sink into yourselves, and be no more."

Mr. Reed informs me that the Author of *Eugenio*, Thomas Beech, a wine merchant at Wrexham, in Denbighshire, soon after its publication, viz. 17th May, 1737, cut his own throat; and that it appears by Swift's works, that the poem had been shown to him, and received some of his corrections. Johnson had read "Eugenio" on his first coming to town, for we see it mentioned in one of his letters to Mr. Cave, which has been inserted in this work.—  
BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> I formerly thought that I had perhaps mistaken the word, and imagined it to be *Corps*, from its similarity of sound to the real one. For an accurate and shrewd unknown gentleman, to whom I am indebted for some remarks on my work, observes on this passage—"Q. if not on the word, *Fort*? A vociferous French preacher said of Bourdaloue, 'Il prêche *fort bien*, et moi *bien fort*.'" *Menagiana*. See also "Anecdotes Littéraires," Article Bourdaloue. But my

Much pleasant conversation passed, which Johnson relished with great good humour. But his conversation alone, or what led to it, or was interwoven with it, is the business of this work.

On Saturday, May 1, we dined by ourselves at our old rendezvous, the Mitre tavern. He was placid, but not much disposed to talk. He observed, that "The Irish mix better with the English than the Scotch do; their language is nearer to English; as a proof of which, they succeed very well as players, which Scotchmen do not. Then, Sir, they have not that extreme nationality which we find in the Scotch. I will do you, Boswell, the justice to say, that you are the most *unscotchified* of your countrymen. You are almost the only instance of a Scotchman that I have known, who did not at every other sentence bring in some other Scotchman."

We drank tea with Mrs. Williams. I introduced a question which has been much agitated in the Church of Scotland, whether the claim of lay-patrons to present ministers to parishes be well founded; and supposing it to be well founded, whether it ought to be exercised without the concurrence of the people? That Church is composed of a series of judicatures;—a Presbytery; a Synod; and finally, a General Assembly; before all of which, this matter may be contended: and in some cases the Presbytery having refused to induct or *settle*, as they call it, the person presented by the patron, it has been found necessary to appeal to the General Assembly. He said, I might see the subject well treated in "The Defence of Pluralities;" and although he thought that a patron should exercise his right with tenderness to the inclinations of the people of a parish, he was very clear as to his right. Then supposing the question to be pleaded before the General Assembly, he dictated to me what follows:—

"Against the right of patrons is commonly opposed, by the inferior judicatures, the plea of conscience. Their conscience tells them, that the people ought to choose their pastor; their conscience tells them, that they ought not to impose upon a congregation a minister ungrateful and unacceptable to his auditors. Conscience is nothing more than a conviction felt by ourselves of something to be done, or something to be avoided; and in questions of simple unperplexed morality, conscience is very often a guide that may be trusted. But before conscience can determine, the state of the question is supposed to be completely known. In questions of law, or of fact, conscience is very often confounded with opinion. No man's conscience can tell him the right of another

ingenious and obliging correspondent, Mr. Abercrombie, of Philadelphia, has pointed out to me the following passage in "Menagiana;" which renders the preceding conjecture unnecessary, and confirms my original statement:

"Madame de Bourdonne, Chanoinesse de Remiremont, venoit d'entendre un discours plein de feu et d'esprit, mais fort peu solide, et tres irregulier. Une de ses amies, qui y prenoit intérêt pour l'orateur, lui dit en sortant, 'Eh bien, Madame, que vous semble-t-il de ce que vous venez d'entendre? Qu'il y a d'esprit?'—'Il y a tant,' repondit Madame de Bourdonne, 'que, je n'y ai pas vû de corps.'" Menagiana, tome ii. p. 64. Amsterd. 1713.—BOSWELL.

man; they must be known by rational investigation, or historical inquiry. Opinion, which he that holds it may call his conscience, may teach some men that religion would be promoted, and quiet preserved by granting to the people universally the choice of their ministers. But it is a conscience very ill informed that violates the rights of one man, for the convenience of another. Religion cannot be promoted by injustice; and it was never yet found that a popular election was very quietly transacted.

“That justice would be violated by transferring to the people the right of patronage, is apparent to all who know whence that right had its original. The right of patronage was not at first a privilege torn by power from unre-sisting poverty. It is not an authority at first usurped in times of ignorance, and established only by succession and by precedents. It is not a grant capriciously made from a higher tyrant to a lower. It is a right dearly purchased by the first possessors, and justly inherited by those that succeeded them. When Christianity was established in this island, a regular mode of public worship was prescribed. Public worship requires a public place; and the proprietors of lands, as they were converted, built churches for their families and their vassals. For the maintenance of ministers, they settled a certain portion of their lands; and a district through which each minister was required to extend his care, was, by that circumscription, constituted a parish. This is a position so generally received in England, that the extent of a manor and of a parish are regularly received for each other. The churches which the proprietors of lands had thus built and thus endowed, they justly thought themselves entitled to provide with ministers; and where the episcopal government prevails the Bishop has no power to reject a man nominated by the patron, but for some crime that might exclude him from the priesthood. For the endow-ment of the church being the gift of the landlord, he was consequently at liberty to give it according to his choice, to any man capable of performing the holy offices. The people did not choose him because the people did not pay him.

“We hear it sometimes urged, that this original right is passed out of memory, and is obliterated and obscured by many translations of property and changes of government; that scarce any church is now in the hands of the heirs of the builders; and that the present persons have entered subsequently upon the pretended rights by a thousand accidental and unknown causes. Much of this, perhaps, is true. But how is the right of patronage extinguished? If the right followed the lands, it is possessed by the same equity by which the lands are possessed. It is, in effect, part of the manor, and protected by the same laws with every other privilege. Let us suppose an estate forfeited by treason, and granted by the Crown to a new family. With the lands were forfeited all the rights appendant to those lands; by the same power that grants the lands, the rights also are granted. The right lost by the patron falls not to the people, but is either retained by the Crown, or what to the people is the same thing, is by the Crown given away. Let it change hands ever so often, it is possessed by him that receives it with the same right as it was conveyed. It may, indeed, like all our possessions, be forcibly seized or fraudulently obtained; but no injury is still done to the people; for what they never had, they have never lost. Caius may usurp the right of Titius, but neither Caius nor Titius injures the people; and no man's conscience, however tender or however active, can

prompt him to restore what may be proved to have never been taken away. Supposing, what I think cannot be proved, that a popular election of ministers were to be desired, our desires are not the measures of equity. It were to be desired that power should be only in the hands of the merciful, and riches in the possession of the generous; but the law must leave both riches and power where it finds them; and must often leave riches with the covetous, and power with the cruel. Convenience may be a rule in little things, where no other rule has been established. But as the great end of government is to give every man his own, no inconvenience is greater than that of making right uncertain. Nor is any man more an enemy to public peace, than he who fills weak heads with imaginary claims, and breaks the series of civil subordination, by inciting the lower classes of mankind to encroach upon the higher.

“Having thus shown that the right of patronage, being originally purchased, may be legally transferred, and that it is now in the hands of lawful possessors, at least as certainly as any other right;—we have left to the advocates of the people no other plea than that of convenience. Let us, therefore, now consider what the people would really gain by a general abolition of the right of patronage. What is most to be desired by such a change is, that the country should be supplied with better ministers. But why should we suppose that the parish will make a wiser choice than the patron? If we suppose mankind actuated by interest, the patron is more likely to choose with caution, because he will suffer more by choosing wrong. By the deficiencies of his minister, or by his vices, he is equally offended with the rest of the congregation; but he will have this reason more to lament them, that they will be imputed to his absurdity or corruption. The qualifications of a minister are well known to be learning and piety. Of his learning the patron is probably the only judge in the parish, and of his piety not less a judge than others; and is more likely to inquire minutely and diligently before he gives a presentation, than one of the parochial rabble, who can give nothing but a vote. It may be urged, that though the parish might not choose better ministers, they would at least choose ministers whom they like better, and who therefore officiate with greater efficacy. That ignorance and perverseness should always obtain what they like, was never considered as the end of government; of which it is the great and standing benefit, that the wise see for the simple, and the regular act for the capricious. But that this argument supposes the people capable of judging, and resolute to act according to their best judgments, though this be sufficiently absurd, it is not all his absurdity. It supposes not only wisdom, but unanimity in those, who upon no other occasions are unanimous or wise. If by some strange concurrence all the voices of a parish should unite in the choice of any single man, though I could not charge the patron with injustice in presenting a minister, I should censure him as unkind and injudicious. But, it is evident, that as in all other popular elections, there will be contrariety of judgment and acrimony of passion, a parish upon every vacancy would break into factions, and the contest for the choice of a minister would set neighbours at variance, and bring discord into families. The minister would be taught all the arts of a candidate, would flatter some, and bribe others; and the electors, as in all other cases, would call for holidays and ale, and break the heads of each other during the jollity of the canvass. The time must, however, come at last, when one of the factions must prevail, and one of



the ministers get possession of the church. On what terms does he enter upon his ministry but those of enmity with half his parish? By what prudence or what diligence can he hope to conciliate the affections of that party by whose defeat he has obtained his living? Every man who voted against him will enter the church with hanging head and downcast eyes, afraid to encounter that neighbour by whose vote and influence he has been overpowered. He will hate his neighbour for opposing him, and his minister for having prospered by the opposition; and as he will never see him but with pain, he will never see him but with hatred. Of a minister presented by the patron, the parish has seldom anything worse to say than that they do not know him. Of a minister chosen by a popular contest, all those who do not favour him, have nursed up in their bosoms principles of hatred and reasons of rejection. Anger is excited principally by pride. The pride of a common man is very little exasperated by the supposed usurpation of an acknowledged superior. He bears only his little share of a general evil, and suffers in common with the whole parish; but when the contest is between equals, the defeat has many aggravations; and he that is defeated by his next neighbour, is seldom satisfied without some revenge: and it is hard to say what bitterness of malignity would prevail in a parish where these elections should happen to be frequent, and the enmity of opposition should be re-kindled before it had cooled."

Though I present to my readers Dr. Johnson's masterly thoughts on the subject, I think it proper to declare that, notwithstanding I am myself a lay-patron, I do not entirely subscribe to his opinion.

On Friday, May 7, I breakfasted with him at Mr. Thrale's, in the Borough. While we were alone, I endeavoured as well as I could to apologise for a lady who had been divorced from her husband by act of Parliament. I said that he had used her very ill, had behaved brutally to her, and that she could not continue to live with him without having her delicacy contaminated; that all affection for him was thus destroyed; that the essence of conjugal union being gone, there remained only a cold form, a mere civil obligation; that she was in the prime of life, with qualities to produce happiness; that these ought not to be lost; and, that the gentleman on whose account she was divorced had gained her heart while thus unhappily situated. Seduced, perhaps, by the charms of the lady in question, I thus attempted to palliate what I was sensible could not be justified; for when I had finished my harangue, my venerable friend gave me a proper check: "My dear Sir, never accustom your mind to mingle virtue and vice. The woman's a whore, and there's an end on't."

He described the father of one of his friends thus: "Sir, he was so exuberant a talker at public meetings, that the gentlemen of his county were afraid of him. No business could be done for his declamation."

He did not give me full credit when I mentioned that I had carried on a short conversation by signs with some Esquimaux, who were then in London, particularly with one of them who was a priest. He thought I could not make them understand me. No man was more incredulous

as to particular facts, which were at all extraordinary ; and therefore no man was more scrupulously inquisitive, in order to discover the truth.

I dined with him this day at the house of my friends, Messrs. Edward and Charles Dilly, booksellers in the Poultry : there were present, their elder brother, Mr. Dilly, of Bedfordshire, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Langton, Mr. Claxton, Reverend Dr. Mayo, a dissenting minister, the Reverend Mr. Toplady, and my friend the Reverend Mr. Temple.

Hawkesworth's compilation of the voyages to the South Sea being mentioned :—JOHNSON : “ Sir, if you talk of it as a subject of commerce, it will be gainful ; if as a book that is to increase human knowledge, I believe there will not be much of that. Hawkesworth can tell only what the voyagers have told him ; and they have found very little, only one new animal, I think.” BOSWELL : “ But many insects, Sir.” JOHNSON : “ Why, Sir, as to insects, Ray reckons of British insects twenty thousand species. They might have stayed at home and discovered enough in that way.”

Talking of birds, I mentioned Mr. Daines Barrington's ingenious essay against the received notion of their migration. JOHNSON : “ I think we have as good evidence for the migration of woodcocks as can be desired. We find they disappear at a certain time of the year, and appear again at a certain time of the year ; and some of them, when weary in their flight, have been known to alight on the rigging of ships far out at sea.” One of the company observed, that there had been instances of some of them found in summer in Essex. JOHNSON : “ Sir, that strengthens our argument. *Exceptio probat regulam*. Some being found, shows that, if all remained, many would be found. A few sick or lame ones may be found.” GOLDSMITH : “ There is a partial migration of the swallows ; the stronger ones migrate, the others do not.”

BOSWELL : “ I am well assured that the people of Otaheite, who have the bread tree, the fruit of which serves them for bread, laughed heartily when they were informed of the tedious process necessary with us to have bread—ploughing, sowing, harrowing, reaping, threshing, grinding, baking.” JOHNSON : “ Why, Sir, all ignorant savages will laugh when they are told of the advantages of civilised life. Were you to tell men who live without houses, how we pile brick upon brick, and rafter upon rafter, and then after a house is raised to a certain height, a man tumbles off a scaffold, and breaks his neck ; he would laugh heartily at our folly in building ; but it does not follow that men are better without houses. No, Sir (holding up a slice of a good loaf), this is better than the bread tree.”

He repeated an argument which is to be found in his “ Rambler ” against the notion that the brute creation is endowed with the faculty of reason : “ Birds build by instinct ; they never improve ; they build their first nest as well as any one they ever build.” GOLDSMITH : “ Yet we see if you take away a bird's nest with the eggs in it, she will make a

slighter nest and lay again." JOHNSON: "Sir, that is because at first she has full time and makes her nest deliberately. In the case you mention she is pressed to lay, and must therefore make her nest quickly and consequently it will be slight." GOLDSMITH: "The nidification of birds is what is least known in natural history, though one of the most curious things in it."

I introduced the subject of toleration. JOHNSON: "Every society has a right to preserve public peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency. To say the *magistrate* has this right, is using an inadequate word; it is the *society* for which the magistrate is agent. He may be morally or theologically wrong in restraining the propagation of opinions which he thinks dangerous, but he is politically right." MAYO: "I am of opinion, Sir, that every man is entitled to liberty of conscience in religion; and that the magistrate cannot restrain that right." JOHNSON: "Sir, I agree with you. Every man has a right to liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking; nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, Sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true. The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks; but while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks." MAYO: "Then, Sir, we are to remain always in error, and truth never can prevail; and the magistrate was right in persecuting the first Christians." JOHNSON: "Sir, the only method by which religious truth can be established is by martyrdom. The magistrate has a right to enforce what he thinks; and he who is conscious of the truth has a right to suffer. I am afraid there is no other way of ascertaining the truth but by persecution on the one hand and enduring it on the other." GOLDSMITH: "But how is a man to act, Sir? Though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrine, may he not think it wrong to expose himself to persecution? Has he a right to do so? Is it not, as it were, committing voluntary suicide?" JOHNSON: "Sir, as to voluntary suicide, as you call it, there are twenty thousand men in an army, who will go without scruple to be shot at, and mount a breach for fivepence a day." GOLDSMITH: "But have they a moral right to do this?" JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, if you will not take the universal opinion of mankind, I have nothing to say. If mankind cannot defend their own way of thinking, I cannot defend it. Sir, if a man is in doubt whether it would be better for him to expose himself to martyrdom or not, he should not do it. He must be convinced that he has a delegation from Heaven." GOLDSMITH: "I would consider whether there is the greater chance of good or evil upon the whole. If I see a man who has fallen into a well, I would wish to help him out:

but if there is a greater probability that he shall pull me in, than that I shall pull him out, I would not attempt it. So were I to go to Turkey, I might wish to convert the Grand Signor to the Christian faith; but when I considered that I should probably be put to death without effectuating my purpose in any degree, I should keep myself quiet."

JOHNSON: "Sir, you must consider that we have perfect and imperfect obligations. Perfect obligations, which are generally not to do something, are clear and positive; as, 'Thou shalt not kill.' But charity, for instance, is not definable by limits. It is a duty to give to the poor; but no man can say how much another should give to the poor, or when a man has given too little to save his soul. In the same manner it is a duty to instruct the ignorant, and of consequence to convert infidels to Christianity; but no man in the common course of things is obliged to carry this to such a degree as to incur the danger of martyrdom, as no man is obliged to strip himself to the shirt, in order to give charity. I have said that a man must be persuaded that he has a particular delegation from Heaven."

GOLDSMITH: "How is this to be known? Our first reformers, who were burnt for not believing bread and wine to be CHRIST—" JOHNSON (interrupting him): "Sir, they were not burnt for not believing bread and wine to be CHRIST, but for insulting those who did believe it. And, Sir, when the first reformers began, they did not intend to be martyred; as many of them ran away as could."

BOSWELL: "But, Sir, there was your countryman Elwal, who, you told me, challenged King George with his black-guards and his red-guards."

JOHNSON: "My countryman Elwal, Sir, should have been put in the stocks—a proper pulpit for him; and he'd have had a numerous audience. A man who preaches in the stocks will always have hearers enough."

BOSWELL: "But Elwal thought himself in the right." JOHNSON:

"We are not providing for mad people; there are places for them in the neighbourhood" (meaning Moorfields.) MAYO: "But, Sir, is it not very hard that I should not be allowed to teach my children what I really believe to be the truth?"

JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, you might contrive to teach your children *extrâ scandalum*; but, Sir, the magistrate, if he knows it, has a right to restrain you. Suppose you teach your children to be thieves?"

MAYO: "This is making a joke of the subject." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, take it thus,—that you teach them

the community of goods; for which there are as many plausible arguments as for most erroneous doctrines. You teach them that all things at first were in common, and that no man had a right to anything but as he laid his hands upon it; and that this still is, or ought to be, the rule amongst mankind. Here, Sir, you sap a great principle in society—property. And don't you think the magistrate would have a right to prevent you? Or, suppose you should teach your children the notion of the Adamites, and they should run naked into the streets, would not the magistrate have a right to flog'em into their doublets?" MAYO ·

“I think the magistrate has no right to interfere till there is some overt act.” BOSWELL: “So, Sir, though he sees an enemy to the state charging a blunderbuss, he is not to interfere till it is fired off!” MAYO: “He must be sure of its direction against the state.” JOHNSON: “The magistrate is to judge of that. He has no right to restrain your thinking, because the evil centres in yourself. If a man were sitting at this table, and chopping off his fingers, the magistrate as guardian of the community, has no authority to restrain him, however he might do it from kindness as a parent. Though, indeed, upon more consideration, I think he may; as it is probable, that he who is chopping off his own fingers, may soon proceed to chop off those of other people. If I think it right to steal Mr. Dilly’s plate, I am a bad man; but he can say nothing to me. If I make an open declaration that I think so, he will keep me out of his house. If I put forth my hand, I shall be sent to Newgate. This is the gradation of thinking, preaching, and acting; if a man thinks erroneously, he may keep his thoughts to himself, and nobody will trouble him; if he preaches erroneous doctrine, society may expel him; if he acts in consequence of it, the law takes place, and he is hanged.” MAYO: “But, Sir, ought not Christians to have liberty of conscience?” JOHNSON: “I have already told you so, Sir. You are coming back to where you were.” BOSWELL: “Dr. Mayo is always taking a return post-chaise, and going the stage over again. He has it at half-price.” JOHNSON: “Dr. Mayo, like other champions for unlimited toleration, has got a set of words.<sup>1</sup> Sir, it is no matter, politically, whether the magistrate be right or wrong. Suppose a club were to be formed, to drink confusion to King George the Third, and a happy restoration to Charles the Third; this would be very bad with respect to the state; but every member of that club must either conform to its rules, or be turned out of it. Old Baxter, I remember, maintains that the magistrate should ‘tolerate all things that are tolerable.’ This is no good definition of toleration upon any principle; but it shows that he thought some things were not tolerable.” TOPLADY: “Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity.”

During this argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester, who, at the close of a long night lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith’s attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mayo’s calm temper and steady perseverance rendered him an admirable subject for the exercise of Dr. Johnson’s powerful abilities. He never flinched: but, after reiterated blows, remained seemingly unmoved as at the first. The scintillations of Johnson’s genius flashed every time he was struck, without his receiving any injury. Hence he obtained the epithet of THE LITERARY ANVIL.—BOSWELL

attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaimed in a bitter tone, "*Take it.*" When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which, he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person: "Sir," said he, to Johnson, "the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour; pray allow us now to hear him." JOHNSON (sternly): "Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent." Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time.

A gentleman present ventured to ask Dr. Johnson if there was not a material difference as to toleration of opinions which lead to action, and opinions merely speculative; for instance, would it be wrong in the magistrate to tolerate those who preach against the doctrine of the TRINITY? Johnson was highly offended, and said, "I wonder, Sir, how a gentleman of your piety can introduce this subject in a mixed company." He told me afterwards, that the impropriety was, that perhaps some of the company might have talked on the subject in such terms as might have shocked him; or he might have been forced to appear in their eyes a narrow-minded man. The gentleman, with submissive deference, said he had only hinted at the question from a desire to hear Dr. Johnson's opinion upon it. JOHNSON: "Why, then, Sir, I think that permitting men to preach any opinion contrary to the doctrine of the Established Church, tends, in a certain degree, to lessen the authority of the Church, and consequently, to lessen the influence of religion." "It may be considered," said the gentleman, "whether it would not be politic to tolerate in such a case." JOHNSON: "Sir, we have been talking of *right*: this is another question. I think it *not* politic to tolerate in such a case."

Though he did not think it fit that so awful a subject should be introduced in a mixed company, and therefore at this time waved the theological question; yet his own orthodox belief in the sacred mystery of the TRINITY is evinced beyond doubt, by the following passage in his private devotions: "O Lord, hear my prayer, for Jesus Christ's sake; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, *three persons and one God*, be all honour and glory, world without end, Amen."<sup>1</sup>

BOSWELL: "Pray, Mr. Dilly, how does Dr. Leland's History of Ireland sell?" JOHNSON (bursting forth with a generous indignation): "The Irish are in a most unnatural state, for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the ten persecutions, of such severity as that which the Protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholics. Did we tell them we have conquered them, it would be above board: to punish them by confiscation

<sup>1</sup> Prayers and Meditations, p. 40.—BOSWELL.

and other penalties, as rebels, was monstrous injustice. King William was not their lawful sovereign : he had not been acknowledged by the Parliament of Ireland, when they appeared in arms against him."

I here suggested something favourable of the Roman Catholics. TOPLADY : "Does not their invocation of saints suppose omnipresence in the saints ?" JOHNSON : "No, Sir ; it supposes only pluri-presence ; and when spirits are divested of matter, it seems probable that they should see with more extent than in an embodied state. There is, therefore, no approach to an invasion of any of the divine attributes in the invocation of saints. But I think it is will-worship, and presumption. I see no command for it, and therefore think it is safer not to practise it."

He and Mr. Langton and I went together to the Club, where we found Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us, "I'll make Goldsmith forgive me ;" and then called to him in a loud voice, "Dr. Goldsmith, something passed to-day where you and I dined ; I ask your pardon." Goldsmith answered placidly, "It must be much from you, Sir, that I take ill." And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.

In our way to the Club to-night, when I regretted that Goldsmith would, upon every occasion, endeavour to shine, by which he often exposed himself, Mr. Langton observed, that he was not like Addison, who was content with the fame of his writings, and did not aim also at excellency in conversation, for which he found himself unfit ; and that he said to a lady who complained of his having talked little in company, "Madam, I have but ninepence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds." I observed that Goldsmith had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but, not content with that, was always taking out his purse. JOHNSON : "Yes, Sir, and that so often an empty purse !"

Goldsmith's incessant desire of being conspicuous in company, was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which was everywhere paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with me for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. "Sir," said he, "you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republic."

He was still more mortified, when talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present ; a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself, as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, "Stay,

stay—Toctor Shonson is going to say something.” This was, no doubt, very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

It may also be observed, that Goldsmith was sometimes content to be treated with an easy familiarity, but upon occasions would be consequential and important. An instance of this occurred in a small particular. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends: as Beauclerk, Beau; Boswell, Bozzy; Langton, Lanky; Murphy, Mur; Sheridan, Sherry. I remember one day, when Tom Davies was telling that Dr. Johnson said, “We are all in labour for a name to *Goldy's* play,” Goldsmith seemed displeas'd that such a liberty should be taken with his name, and said, “I have often desired him not to call me *Goldy*.” Tom was remarkably attentive to the most minute circumstance about Johnson. I recollect his telling me once, on my arrival in London, “Sir, our great friend has made an improvement on his appellation of old Mr. Sheridan. He calls him now *Sherry derry*.”

TO THE REVEREND MR. BAGSHAW, AT BROMLEY.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,

May 8, 1773.

“I return you my sincere thanks for your additions to my Dictionary; but the new edition has been published some time, and therefore I cannot now make use of them. Whether I shall ever revise it more, I know not. If many readers had been as judicious, as diligent, and as communicative as yourself, my work had been better. The world must at present take it as it is.

“I am, Sir,

“Your most obliged and most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

On Sunday, May 8, I dined with Johnson at Mr. Langton's with Dr. Beattie and some other company. He descanted on the subject of Literary Property. “There seems,” said he, “to be in authors a stronger right of property than that by occupaney; a metaphysical right, a right, as it were, of creation, which should from its nature be perpetual; but the consent of nations is against it; and indeed reason and the interest of learning are against it; for were it to be perpetual, no book, however useful, could be universally diffused amongst mankind, should the proprietor take it into his head to restrain its circulation.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Thomas Bagshaw, M.A., who died on November 20, 1787, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, Chaplain of Bromley College, in Kent, and Rector of Southfleet. He had resigned the cure of Bromley Parish some time before his death. For this and another letter from Dr. Johnson in 1784, to the same truly respectable man, I am indebted to Dr. John Loveday, of the Commons, a son of the late learned and pious John Loveday, Esq., of Caversham in Berkshire, who obligingly transcribed them for me from the originals in his possession. This worthy gentleman, having retired from business, now lives in Warwickshire. The world has been lately obliged to him as the Editor of the late Rev. Dr. Townson's excellent work, modestly entitled “A Discourse on the Evangelical History, from the Inherent to the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;” to which is prefixed a truly interesting and pleasing account of the author by the Rev. Mr. Ralph Churton.—BOSWELL.



No book could have the advantage of being edited with notes, however necessary to its elucidation, should the proprietor perversely oppose it. For the general good of the world, therefore, whatever valuable book has once been created by an author, and issued out by him, should be understood as no longer in his power, but as belonging to the public; at the same time the author is entitled to an adequate reward. This he should have by an exclusive right to his work for a considerable number of years."

He attacked Lord Monboddo's strange speculation on the primitive state of human nature; observing, "Sir, it is all conjecture about a thing useless, even were it known to be true. Knowledge of all kind is good. Conjecture, as to things useful, is good; but conjecture as to what it would be useless to know, such as whether men went upon all four, is very idle."

On Monday, May 9, as I was to set out on my return to Scotland next morning, I was desirous to see as much of Dr. Johnson as I could. But I first called on Goldsmith to take leave of him. The jealousy and envy which, though possessed of many most amiable qualities, he frankly avowed, broke out violently at this interview. Upon another occasion, when Goldsmith confessed himself to be of an envious disposition, I contended with Johnson that we ought not to be angry with him, he was so candid in owning it. "Nay, Sir," said Johnson, "we must be angry that a man has such a superabundance of an odious quality that he cannot keep it within his own breast, but it boils over." In my opinion, however, Goldsmith had not more of it than other people have, but only talked of it freely.

He now seemed very angry that Johnson was going to be a traveller; said, "he would be a dead weight for me to carry, and that I should never be able to lug him along through the Highlands and Hebrides." Nor would he patiently allow me to enlarge upon Johnson's wonderful abilities; but exclaimed, "Is he like Burke, who winds into a subject like a serpent?" "But," said I, "Johnson is the Hercules who strangled serpents in his cradle."

I dined with Dr. Johnson at General Paoli's. He was obliged, by indisposition, to leave the company early; he appointed me, however, to meet him in the evening at Mr. (now Sir Robert) Chambers's in the Temple, where he accordingly came, though he continued to be very ill. Chambers, as is common on such occasions, prescribed various remedies to him. JOHNSON (fretted by pain): "Prythee don't tease me. Stay till I am well, and then you shall tell me how to cure myself." He grew better, and talked with a noble enthusiasm of keeping up the representation of respectable families. His zeal on this subject was a circumstance in his character exceedingly remarkable, when it is considered that he himself had no pretensions to blood. I heard him once say, "I have great merit in being zealous for subordination and the honours of birth; for I can hardly tell who was my grandfather." He

maintained the dignity and propriety of male succession, in opposition to the opinion of one of our friends, who had that day employed Mr. Chambers to draw his will, devising his estate to his three sisters, in preference to a remote heir male. Johnson called them "three *dowdies*," and said, with as high a spirit as the boldest Baron in the most perfect days of the feudal system, "An ancient estate should always go to males. It is mighty foolish to let a stranger have it because he marries your daughter, and takes your name. As for an estate newly acquired by trade, you may give it, if you will, to the dog *Towser*, and let him keep his *own* name."

I have known him at times exceedingly diverted at what seemed to others a very small sport. He now laughed immoderately, without any reason that we could perceive, at our friend's making his will; called him the *testator*, and added, "I dare say he thinks he has done a mighty thing. He won't stay till he gets home to his seat in the country, to produce this wonderful deed: he'll call up the landlord of the first inn on the road; and, after a suitable preface upon the mortality and the uncertainty of life, will tell him that he should not delay making his will; and 'here, Sir,' will he say, 'is my will, which I have just made, with the assistance of one of the ablest lawyers in the kingdom;' and he will read it to him (laughing all the time). He believes he has made this will; but he did not make it: you, Chambers, made it for him. I trust you have had more conscience than to make him say, 'being of sound understanding;' ha, ha, ha! I hope he has left me a legacy. I'd have his will turned into verse, like a ballad."

In this playful manner did he run on, exulting in his own pleasantry, which certainly was not such as might be expected from the author of "The Rambler," but which is here preserved, that my readers may be acquainted even with the slightest occasional characteristics of so eminent a man.

Mr. Chambers did not by any means relish this jocularity upon a matter of which *pars magna fuit*, and seemed impatient till he got rid of us. Johnson could not stop his merriment, but continued it all the way till he got without the Temple-gate. He then burst into such a fit of laughter, that he appeared to be almost in a convulsion; and, in order to support himself, laid hold of one of the posts at the side of the foot pavement, and sent forth peals so loud, that in the silence of the night his voice seemed to resound from Temple-bar to Fleet-ditch.

This most ludicrous exhibition of the awful, melancholy, and venerable Johnson, happened well to counteract the feelings of sadness which I used to experience when parting with him for a considerable time. I accompanied him to his door, where he gave me his blessing.

He records of himself this year, "Between Easter and Whitsuntide, having always considered that time as propitious to study, I attempted to learn the Low Dutch Language." It is to be observed, that he here

admits an opinion of the human mind being influenced by seasons, which he ridicules in his writings. His progress, he says, was interrupted by a fever "which, by the imprudent use of a small print, left an inflammation in his useful eye." We cannot but admire his spirit when we know,



JOHNSON'S FIT OF LAUGHTER AT THE TEMPLE GATE.

that amidst a complication of bodily and mental distress, he was still animated with the desire of intellectual improvement.<sup>1</sup> Various notes of his studies appear on different days, in his manuscript diary of this year; such as,

*"Inchoavi lectionem Pentateuchi—Finivi lectionem Conf. Fab. Burdonum.—Legi primum actum Troadum.—Legi Dissertationem Clerici postremam de Pent.—2 of Clark's Sermons.—L. Apollonii pugnam Betriciam.—L. centum versus Homeri."*

Let this serve as a specimen of what accessions of literature he was perpetually infusing into his mind, while he charged himself with idleness.

This year died Mrs. Salusbury (mother of Mrs. Thrale), a lady whom he appears to have esteemed much, and whose memory he honoured with an Epitaph.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Prayers and Meditations," p. 129.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Piozzi's "Anecdotes of Johnson," p. 131.—BOSWELL.



DR. JOHNSON IN HIS HEBRIDEAN COSTUME.

## CHAPTER VIII.—1773.

JOHNSON SETS OUT ON HIS "TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES"—ARRIVES IN EDINBURGH, AND VISITS THE ISLES BY WAY OF ABERDEEN AND INVERNESS—LETTERS TO BOSWELL—DAVIES EXCITES JOHNSON'S ANGER BY PUBLISHING HIS "MISCELLANEOUS AND FUGITIVE PIECES," WITHOUT PERMISSION—JOHNSON WRITES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS "TOUR"—LETTERS TO GEORGE STEEVENS, HIS ASSOCIATE IN EDITING SHAKSPEARE'S WORKS—DEATH OF GOLDSMITH, ON WHOM JOHNSON COMPOSES A GREEK EPITAPH—VISITS WALES WITH MR. AND MRS. THRALE—WRITES "THE PATRIOT"—MR. PERKINS—HOOLE'S TRAGEDY, "CLEONICE."

IN a letter from Edinburgh, dated the 29th of May, I pressed him to persevere in his resolution to make this year the projected visit to the Hebrides, of which he and I had talked for many years, and which I was confident would afford us much entertainment.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

*Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, July 5, 1773.*

"When your letter came to me, I was so darkened by an inflammation in my eye that I could not for some time read it. I can now write without trouble, and can read large prints. My eye is gradually growing stronger; and I hope will be able to take some delight in the survey of a Caledonian loch.

"Chambers is going a Judge, with six thousand a-year, to Bengal. He and I shall come down together as far as Newcastle, and thence I shall easily

get to Edinburgh. Let me know the exact time when your Courts intermit. I must conform a little to Chambers's occasions, and he must conform a little to mine. The time which you shall fix must be the common point to which we will come as near as we can. Except this eye, I am very well.

"Beattie is so caressed, and invited, and treated, and liked, and flattered by the great, that I can see nothing of him. I am in great hope that he will be well provided for, and then we will live upon him at the Marischal College, without pity or modesty.

"—— left the town without taking leave of me, and is gone in deep dudgeon to —— . Is not this very childish? Where is now my legacy?

"I hope your dear lady and her dear baby are both well. I shall see them too when I come; and I have that opinion of your choice, as to suspect that when I have seen Mrs. Boswell, I shall be less willing to go away.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"Write to me as soon as you can. Chambers is now at Oxford."

I again wrote to him, informing him that the Court of Session rose on the 12th of August, hoping to see him before that time, and expressing, perhaps in too extravagant terms, my admiration of him, and my expectation of pleasure from our intended tour.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

*August 3, 1773.*

"I shall set out from London on Friday the 6th of this month, and purpose not to loiter much by the way. Which day I shall be at Edinburgh I cannot exactly tell. I suppose I must drive to an inn, and send a porter to find you.

"I am afraid Beattie will not be at his College soon enough for us, and I shall be sorry to miss him; but there is no staying for the concurrence of all conveniences. We will do as well as we can.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,

*August 3, 1773.*

"Not being at Mr. Thrale's when your letter came, I had written the inclosed paper and sealed it; bringing it hither for a frank, I found yours. If any thing could repress my ardour, it would be such a letter as yours. To disappoint a friend is displeasing: and he that forms expectations like yours, must be disappointed. Think only when you see me, that you see a man who loves you, and is proud and glad that you love him.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most affectionate,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,

*Newcastle, Aug. 11, 1773.*

"I came hither last night, and hope, but do not absolutely promise, to be in Edinburgh on Saturday. Beattie will not come so soon.

"I am, Sir.

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"My compliments to your lady."

TO THE SAME.

*"Saturday night.*

"Mr. Johnson sends his compliments to Mr. Boswell, being just arrived at Boyd's."

His stay in Scotland was from the 18th of August, on which day he arrived, till the 22nd of November, when he set out on his return to London; and I believe ninety-four days were never passed by any man in a more vigorous exertion.

He came by the way of Berwick-upon-Tweed to Edinburgh, where he remained a few days, and then went by St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Inverness, and Fort Augustus, to the Hebrides, to visit which was the principal object he had in view. He visited the isles of Sky, Rasay, Coll, Mull, Inchkenneth, and Icolmkill. He travelled through Argyleshire, by Inverary, and from thence by Lochlomond and Dumbarton to



CATHEDRAL OF ICOLMKILL, OR IONA.

Glasgow, then by Loudon to Auchinleck in Ayrshire, the seat of my family, and then by Hamilton, back to Edinburgh, where he again spent some time. He thus saw the four Universities of Scotland, its

three principal cities, and as much of the Highland and insular life as was sufficient for his philosophical contemplation. I had the pleasure of accompanying him during the whole of his journey. He was respectfully entertained by the great, the learned, and the elegant wherever he went; nor was he less delighted with the hospitality which he experienced in humbler life.

His various adventures, and the force and vivacity of his mind, as exercised during this peregrination, upon innumerable topics, have been faithfully, and, to the best of my abilities, displayed in my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," to which, as the public has been pleased to honour it by a very extensive circulation, I beg leave to refer, as to a separate and remarkable portion of his life,<sup>1</sup> which may be there seen in detail, and which exhibits as striking a view of his powers in conversation, as his works do of his excellence in writing. Nor can I deny to myself the very flattering gratification of inserting here the character which my friend Mr. Courtenay has been pleased to give of that work:

"With Reynolds' pencil, vivid, bold, and true,  
So fervent Boswell gives him to our view:  
In every trait we see his mind expand;  
The master rises by the pupil's hand;  
We love the writer, praise his happy vein,  
Graced with the *naïveté* of the sage Montaigne.  
Hence not alone are brighter parts display'd,  
But e'en the specks of character portray'd:  
We see the Rambler with fastidious smile  
Mark the lone tree, and note the heath-clad isle;  
But when the heroic tale of Flora<sup>2</sup> charms,  
Deck'd in a kilt, he wields a chieftain's arms:  
The tuneful piper sounds a martial strain,  
And Samuel sings 'The King shall have his *ain*.'"

During his stay at Edinburgh, after his return from the Hebrides, he was at great pains to obtain information concerning Scotland; and it will appear, from his subsequent letters, that he was not less solicitous for intelligence on this subject after his return to London.

" TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" DEAR SIR,

Nov. 27, 1773.

"I came home last night, without any incommodity, danger, or weariness, and am ready to begin a new journey. I shall go to Oxford on Monday.

<sup>1</sup> The author was not a small gainer by this extraordinary journey; for Dr. Johnson thus writes to Mrs. Thrale, Nov. 3, 1773: "Boswell will praise my resolution and perseverance, and I shall in return celebrate his good humour and perpetual cheerfulness. He has better faculties than I had imagined; more justness of discernment, and more fecundity of images. It is very convenient to travel with him: for there is no house where he is not received with kindness and respect." Let. 90, to Mrs. Thrale.—MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> "The celebrated Flora Macdonald." See Boswell's "Tour to the Hebrides."

I know Mrs. Boswell wished me well to go;<sup>1</sup> her wishes have not been disappointed. Mrs. Williams has received Sir A.'s<sup>2</sup> letter.

"Make my compliments to all those to whom my compliments may be welcome.

"Let the box<sup>3</sup> be sent as soon as it can, and let me know when to expect it.

"Inquire, if you can, the order of the Clans; Macdonald is first, Maclean second; further I cannot go. Quicken Dr. Webster.<sup>4</sup>

"I am, Sir,

"Yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"*Edinburgh, Dec. 2, 1773.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"You shall have what information I can procure as to the order of the Clans. A gentleman of the name of Grant tells me that there is no settled order among them; and he says that the Macdonalds were not placed upon the right of the army at Culloden: the Stuarts were. I shall, however, examine witnesses of every name that I can find here. Dr. Webster shall be quickened too. I like your little memorandums; they are symptoms of your being in earnest with your book of northern travels.

"Your box shall be sent next week by sea. You will find in it some pieces of the broom bush, which you saw growing on the old castle of Auchinleck. The wood has a curious appearance when sawn across. You may either have a little writing-standish made of it, or get it formed into boards for a treatise on witchcraft, by way of a suitable binding."

\* \* \* \* \*

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

"*Edinburgh, Dec. 18, 1773.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"You promised me an inscription for a print to be taken from an historical picture of Mary Queen of Scots, being forced to resign her crown, which Mr Hamilton at Rome has painted for me. The two following have been sent to me:—

<sup>1</sup> In this he showed a very acute penetration. My wife paid him the most assiduous and respectful attention, while he was our guest; so that I wonder how he discovered her wishing for his departure. The truth is, that his irregular hours and uncouth habits, such as turning the candles with their heads downwards, when they did not burn bright enough, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, could not but be disagreeable to a lady. Besides, she had not that high admiration of him which was felt by most of those who knew him; and what was very natural to a female mind, she thought he had too much influence over her husband. She once in a little warmth made, with more point than justice, this remark upon that subject: "I have seen many a bear led by a man; but I never before saw a man led by a bear."—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Alexander Gordon, one of the Professors at Aberdeen.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> This was a box containing a number of curious things which he had picked up in Scotland, particularly some horn spoons.—BOSWELL.

<sup>4</sup> The Reverend Dr. Alexander Webster, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, a man of distinguished abilities, who had promised him information concerning the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.—BOSWELL.



*' Maria Scotorum Regina meliori seculo digna, jus regium civibus seditiosis invita resignat.'*

*' Cives seditiosi Mariam Scotorum Reginam sese muneri abdicare invitam cogunt.'*

"Be so good as to read the passage in Robertson, and see if you cannot give me a better inscription. I must have it both in Latin and English; so if you should not give me another Latin one, you will at least choose the best of these two, and send a translation of it."

\* \* \* \* \*

His humane forgiving disposition was put to a pretty strong test on his return to London, by a liberty which Mr. Thomas Davies had taken with him in his absence, which was, to publish two volumes, entitled, "Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces," which he advertised in the newspapers, "By the Author of the Rambler." In this collection, several of Dr. Johnson's acknowledged writings, several of his anonymous performances, and some which he had written for others, were inserted; but there were also some in which he had no concern whatever. He was at first very angry, as he had good reason to be. But, upon consideration of his poor friend's narrow circumstances, and that he had only a little profit in view, and meant no harm, he soon relented, and continued his kindness to him as formerly.

In the course of his self-examination with retrospect to this year, he seems to have been much dejected: for he says, January 1, 1774, "This year has passed with so little improvement, that I doubt whether I have not rather impaired than increased my learning;"<sup>1</sup> and yet we have seen how he *read*, and we know how he *talked* during that period.

He was now seriously engaged in writing an account of our travels in the Hebrides, in consequence of which I had the pleasure of a more frequent correspondence with him.

" TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" DEAR SIR,

Jan. 29, 1774.

"My operations have been hindered by a cough; at least I flatter myself, that if my cough had not come, I should have been further advanced. But I have had no intelligence from Dr. W——, [Webster] nor from the Excise-office nor from you. No account of the little borough.<sup>2</sup> Nothing of the Erse language. I have yet heard nothing of my box.

"You must make haste and gather me all you can, and do it quickly, or I will and shall do without it.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and tell her that I do not love her the less for wishing me away. I gave her trouble enough, and shall be glad, in recompense, to give her any pleasure.

"I would send some porter into the Hebrides, if I knew which way it could be got to my kind friends there. Inquire, and let me know.

<sup>1</sup> "Prayers and Meditations," p. 129.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient Burgh of Prestick in Ayrshire.—BOSWELL.

"Make my compliments to all the Doctors of Edinburgh, and to all my friends, from one end of Scotland to the other.

"Write to me, and send me what intelligence you can: and if anything is too bulky for the post, let me have it by the carrier. I do not like trusting wind and waves.

I am, dear Sir, your most, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,

London, Feb. 7, 1774.

"In a day or two after I had written the last discontented letter, I received my box, which was very welcome. But still I must entreat you to hasten Dr. Webster, and continue to pick up what you can that may be useful.

"Mr. Ogleshorpe was with me this morning, you know his errand. He was not unwelcome.

"Tell Mrs. Boswell that my good intentions towards her still continue. I should be glad to do anything that would either benefit or please her.

"Chambers is not yet gone, but so hurried or so negligent, or so proud, that I rarely see him. I have indeed, for some weeks past, been very ill of a cold and cough, and have been at Mrs. Thrale's, that I might be taken care of. I am much better; *novæ redeunt in prælia vires*; but I am yet tender, and easily disordered. How happy it was that neither of us were ill in the Hebrides.

"The question of Literary Property is this day before the Lords. Murphy drew up the Appellant's case, that is, the plea against the perpetual right. I have not seen it, nor heard the decision. I would not have the right perpetual.

"I will write to you as anything occurs, and do you send me something about my Scottish friends. I have very great kindness for them. Let me know likewise how fees come in, and when we are to see you.

"I am, Sir, yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

He at this time wrote the following letters to Mr. Steevens, his able associate in editing Shakspeare:—

"TO GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ., HAMPSTEAD.

"SIR,

Feb. 7, 1774.

"If I am asked when I have seen Mr. Steevens, you know what answer I must give; if I am asked when I shall see him, I wish you would tell me what to say.

"If you have 'Lesley's History of Scotland,' or any other book about Scotland, except Boetius and Buchanan, it will be a kindness if you send them to,

"Sir, your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"SIR,

Feb. 21, 1774.

"We are thinking to augment our Club, and I am desirous of nominating you, if you care to stand the ballot, and can attend on Friday nights at least

twice in five weeks; less than this is too little, and rather more will be expected. Be pleased to let me know before Friday.

“ I am, Sir, your most, &c.,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

TO THE SAME.

“ SIR,

March 5, 1774.

“ Last night you became a member of the Club; if you call on me on Friday, I will introduce you. A gentleman proposed after you, was rejected. I thank you for Neander,<sup>1</sup> but wish he were not so fine. I will take care of him.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR.

March 5, 1774.

“ Dr. Webster's informations were much less exact and much less determinate than I expected: they are, indeed, much less positive than, if he can trust his own book,<sup>2</sup> which he laid before me, he is able to give. But I believe it will always be found, that he who calls much for information will advance his work but slowly.

“ I am, however, obliged to you, dear Sir, for your endeavours to help me, and hope, that between us something will some time be done, if not on this, on some occasion.

“ Chambers is either married or almost married to Miss Wilton, a girl of sixteen, exquisitely beautiful, whom he has, with his lawyer's tongue, persuaded to take her chance with him in the East.

“ We have added to the club, Charles Fox, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr. Fordyce, and Mr. Steevens.

“ Return my thanks to Dr. Webster. Tell Dr. Robertson I have not much to reply to his censure of my negligence: and tell Dr. Blair, that since he has written hither what I said to him, we must now consider ourselves as even, forgive one another, and begin again. I care not how soon, for he is a very pleasing man. Pay my compliments to all my friends, and remind Lord Elibank of his promise to give me all his works.

“ I hope Mrs. Boswell and little Miss are well.—When shall I see them again? She is a sweet lady, only she was so glad to see me go, that I have almost a mind to come again, that she may again have the same pleasure.

“ Inquire if it be practicable to send a small present of a cask of porter to Dunvegan, Rasay, and Col. I would not wish to be thought forgetful of civilities.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

See the Catalogue of Mr. Steevens's Library, No. 265: “ Neandri (Mich.) Opus aureum, Gr. et Lat. 2 tom. 4to. corio turcico, foliis deauratis. Lipsiæ, 1577.”—This was doubtless the book which appears to have been lent by Mr. Steevens to Dr. Johnson.—MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> A manuscript account drawn by Dr. Webster of all the parishes in Scotland, ascertaining their length, breadth, number of inhabitants, and distinguishing Protestants and Roman Catholics. This book had been transmitted to government and Dr. Johnson saw a copy of it in Dr. Webster's possession.—BOSWELL.

On the 5th of March I wrote to him, requesting his counsel whether I should this spring come to London. I stated to him on the one hand some pecuniary embarrassments, which, together with my wife's situation at that time, made me hesitate : and, on the other, the pleasure and improvement which my annual visit to the metropolis always afforded me : and particularly mentioned a peculiar satisfaction which I experienced in celebrating the festival of Easter in St. Paul's Cathedral ; that to my fancy it appeared like going up to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover ; and that the strong devotion which I felt on that occasion diffused its influence on my mind through the rest of the year.

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR, [Not dated, but written about the 15th of March.]

“ I am ashamed to think that since I received your letter I have passed so many days without answering it.

“ I think there is no great difficulty in resolving your doubts. The reasons for which you are inclined to visit London, are, I think, not of sufficient strength to answer the objections. That you should delight to come once a year to the fountain of intelligence and pleasure, is very natural ; but both information and pleasure must be regulated by propriety. Pleasure, which cannot be obtained but by unseasonable or unsuitable expense, must always end in pain ; and pleasure which must be enjoyed at the expense of another's pain, can never be such as a worthy mind can fully delight in.

“ What improvement you might gain by coming to London, you may easily supply or easily compensate, by enjoining yourself some particular study at home, or opening some new avenue to information. Edinburgh is not yet exhausted ; and I am sure you will find no pleasure here which can deserve either that you should anticipate any part of your future fortune, or that you should condemn yourself and your lady to penurious frugality for the rest of the year.

“ I need not tell you what regard you owe to Mrs. Boswell's entreaties ; or how much you ought to study the happiness of her who studies yours with so much diligence, and of whose kindness you enjoy such good effects. Life cannot subsist in society but by reciprocal concessions. She permitted you to ramble last year, you must permit her now to keep you at home.

“ Your last reason is so serious that I am unwilling to oppose it. Yet you must remember, that your image of worshipping once a year in a certain place, in imitation of the Jews, is but a comparison ; and *simile non est idem* ; if the annual resort to Jerusalem was a duty to the Jews, it was a duty because it was commanded ; and you have no such command, therefore no such duty. It may be dangerous to receive too readily, and indulge too fondly, opinions from which perhaps, no pious mind is wholly disengaged, of local sanctity and local devotion. You know what strange effects they have produced over a great part of the Christian world. I am now writing, and you, when you read this, are reading under the eye of Omnipresence.

“ To what degree fancy is to be admitted into religious offices, it would require much deliberation to determine. I am far from intending totally to

exclude it. Fancy is a faculty bestowed by our Creator, and it is reasonable that all his gifts should be used to his glory, that all our faculties should co-operate in his worship; but they are to co-operate according to the will of him that gave them, according to the order which his wisdom has established. As ceremonies prudential or convenient are less obligatory than positive ordinances, as bodily worship is only the token to others or ourselves of mental adoration, so Fancy is always to act in subordination to Reason. We may take Fancy for a companion, but must follow Reason as our guide. We may allow Fancy to suggest certain ideas in certain places; but Reason must always be heard, when she tells us that those ideas and those places have no natural or necessary relation. When we enter a church, we habitually recal to mind the duty of adoration, but we must not omit adoration for want of a temple; because we know, and ought to remember, that the Universal Lord is everywhere present; and that, therefore, to come to Jona, or to Jerusalem, though it may be useful, cannot be necessary.

“ Thus I have answered your letter, and have not answered it negligently. I love you too well to be careless when you are serious.

“ I think I shall be very diligent next week about our travels, which I have too long neglected.

I am, dear Sir, your most, &c.,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.

“ Compliments to Madam and Miss.”

#### TO THE SAME.

“ *May 10, 1774.*

“ THE lady who delivers this has a lawsuit, in which she desires to make use of your skill and eloquence, and she seems to think that she shall have something more of both for a recommendation from me; which, though I know how little you want any external incitement to your duty, I could not refuse her, because I know that at least it will not hurt her, to tell you that I wish her well.

I am, Sir,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

#### “ MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

“ *Edinburgh, May 12, 1774.*

“ LORD HAILES has begged of me to offer you his best respects, and to transmit to you specimens of ‘ Annals of Scotland, from the accession of Malcolm Kenmore, to the death of James V.,’ in drawing up which his Lordship has been engaged for some time. His Lordship writes to me thus: ‘ If I could procure Dr. Johnson’s criticisms, they would be of great use to me in the prosecution of my work, as they would be judicious and true. I have no right to ask that favour of him. If you could, it would highly oblige me.’

“ Dr. Blair requests you may be assured that he did not write to London what you said to him, and that neither by word or letter has he made the least complaint of you; but on the contrary, has a high respect for you, and loves you much more since he saw you in Scotland. It would both divert and please you to see his eagerness about this matter.”

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

*Streatham, June 12, 1774.*

“ Yesterday I put the first sheets of ‘ The Journey to the Hebrides ’ to the press. I have endeavoured to do you some justice in the first paragraph. It will be one volume in octavo, not thick.

“ It will be proper to make some presents in Scotland. You shall tell me to whom I shall give; and I have stipulated twenty-five for you to give in your own name. Some will take the present better from me, others better from you. In this you who are to live in the place ought to direct. Consider it. Whatever you can get for my purpose send me; and make my compliments to your lady and both the young ones.

“ I am, Sir, your, &c.

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

*Edinburgh, June 24, 1774.*

“ You do not acknowledge the receipt of the various packets which I have sent to you. Neither can I prevail with you to *answer* my letters, though you honour me with *returns*. You have said nothing to me about poor Goldsmith,<sup>1</sup> nothing about Langton.

“ I have received for you, from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland, the following Erse books:—‘ The New Testament; ’—‘ Baxter’s Call; ’—‘ The Confession of Faith of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster; ’—‘ The Mother’s Catechism; ’—‘ A Gaelic and English Vocabulary.’ ”<sup>2</sup>

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

*July 4, 1774.*

“ I wish you could have looked over my book before the printer, but it could not easily be. I suspect some mistakes; but as I deal, perhaps, more in notions than in facts, the matter is not great, and the second edition will be mended, if any such there be. The press will go on slowly for a time, because I am going into Wales to-morrow.

“ I should be very sorry if I appeared to treat such a character as Lord Hailes otherwise than with high respect. I return the sheets,<sup>3</sup> to which I have done what mischief I could; and finding it so little, thought not much of sending them. The narrative is clear, lively, and short.

“ I have done worse to Lord Hailes than by neglecting his sheets; I have run him in debt. Dr. Horne, the President of Magdalen College, in Oxford, wrote to me about three months ago, that he purposed to reprint Walton’s Lives, and desired me to contribute to the work; my answer was, that Lord Hailes intended the same publication; and Dr. Horne has resigned it to him. His Lordship must now think seriously about it.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Goldsmith died April 4, this year.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> These books Dr. Johnson presented to the Bodleian Library.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> On the cover enclosing them, Dr. Johnson wrote—“ If my delay has given any reason for supposing that I have not a very deep sense of the honour done me by asking my judgment I am very sorry.”—BOSWELL.

“Of poor dear Dr. Goldsmith there is little to be told, more than the papers have made public. He died of a fever, made, I am afraid, more violent by uneasiness of mind. His debts began to be heavy, and all his resources were exhausted. Sir Joshua is of opinion that he owed not less than two thousand pounds. Was ever poet so trusted before?”

“You may, if you please, put the inscription thus :—‘*Maria Scotorum Regina nata 15—, a suis in exilium acta 15—, ab hospitiâ neci data 15—.*’ You must find the years.

“Of your second daughter, you certainly gave the account yourself, though you have forgotten it. While Mrs. Boswell is well, never doubt of a boy. Mrs. Thrale brought, I think, five girls running, but while I was with you she had a boy.

“I am obliged to you for all your pamphlets, and of the last I hope to make some use. I made some of the former.

“I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.

“My compliments to all the three ladies.”

“TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT LANGTON, NEAR SPILSBY  
LINCOLNSHIRE.

“DEAR SIR,

July 5, 1774.

“You have reason to reproach me that I have left your last letter so long unanswered, but I had nothing particular to say. Chambers, you find, is gone far, and poor Goldsmith is gone much further. He died of a fever, exasperated, as I believe, by the fear of distress. He had raised money and squandered it, by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense. But let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man.

“I have just begun to print my ‘Journey to the Hebrides,’ and am leaving the press to take another journey into Wales, whither Mr. Thrale is going, to take possession of, at least, five hundred a-year, fallen to his lady. All at Streatham, that are alive, are well.

“I have never recovered from the last dreadful illness, but flatter myself that I grow gradually better; much, however, yet remains to mend. *Κύριε ἐλέησον.*

“If you have the Latin version of *Busy, curious, thirsty fly*, be so kind as to transcribe and send it; but you need not be in haste, for I shall be I know not where for at least five weeks. I wrote the following tetrastich on poor Goldsmith :—

“Τὸν τάφον εἰσοράας τὸν Ὀλιβάριο, κινήν  
Αφοοσι μὴ σέμνην, Ξεῖνε, πόδεσσι πάτει.  
Οἷσι μέμηλε φύσις, μέτρων χάρις, ἔργα παλαιῶ·  
Κλαίετε ποιητὴν, ἰστόρικον, φυσικόν.

“Please to make my most respectful compliments to all the ladies, and remember me to young George and his sisters. I reckon George begins to show a pair of heels.

“Do not be sullen now, but let me find a letter when I come back.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your affectionate humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

## " TO MR. ROBERT LEVET.

" DEAR SIR,

*Llewenny, in Denbighshire, August 16, 1774.*

" Mr. Thrale's affairs have kept him here a great while, nor do I know exactly when we shall come hence. I have sent you a bill upon Mr. Strahan.

" I have made nothing of the ipcaeanha, but have taken abundance of pills, and hope that they have done me good.

" Wales, so far as I have yet seen of it, is a very beautiful and rich country, all enclosed and planted. Denbigh is not a mean town. Make my compliments to all my friends, and tell Frank I hope he remembers my advice. When his money is out, let him have more.

" I am, Sir, your humble servant.

" SAM. JOHNSON."

## " MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

*Edinburgh, Aug. 30, 1774.*

" You have given me an inscription for a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots, in which you, in a short and striking manner, point out her hard fate. But you will be pleased to keep in mind that my picture is a representation of a particular scene in her history: her being forced to resign her crown, while she was imprisoned in the castle of Lochleven. I must, therefore, beg that you will be kind enough to give me an inscription suited to that particular scene, or determine which of the two formerly transmitted to you is the best; and, at any rate, favour me with an English translation. It will be doubly kind if you comply with my request speedily.

" Your critical notes on the specimen of Lord Hailes's 'Annals of Scotland,' are excellent. I agreed with you on every one of them. He himself objected only to the alteration of *free* to *brave*, in the passage where he says that Edward 'departed with the glory due to the conqueror of a free people.' He says, to call the Scots brave would only add to the glory of their conqueror. You will make allowance for the national zeal of our annalist. I now send a few more leaves of the 'Annals,' which I hope you will peruse, and return with observations, as you did upon the former occasion. Lord Hailes writes to me thus: 'Mr. Boswell will be pleased to express the grateful sense which Sir David Dalrymple has of Dr. Johnson's attention to his little specimen. The further specimen will show, that

' Even in an *Edward* he can see desert.'

" It gives me much pleasure to hear that a republication of Isaac Walton's 'Lives' is intended. You have been in a mistake in thinking that Lord Hailes had it in view. I remember one morning, while he sat with you in my house, he said that there should be a new edition of 'Walton's Lives;' and you said that 'they should be benoted a little.' This was all that passed on that subject. You must, therefore, inform Dr. Horne that he may resume his plan. I enclose a note concerning it; and if Dr. Horne will write to me, all the attention that I can give, shall be cheerfully bestowed upon what I think a pious work,—the preservation and elucidation of Walton, by whose writings I have been most pleasingly edified.

\* \* \* \* \*



## "MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

*"Edinburgh, Sept. 16, 1774.*

"WALES has probably detained you longer than I supposed. You will have become quite a mountaineer, by visiting Scotland one year and Wales another. You must next go to Switzerland. Cambria will complain, if you do not honour her also with some remarks. And I find *concessère columnæ*, the booksellers expect another book. I am impatient to see your 'Tour to Scotland and the Hebrides.' Might you not send me a copy by the post as soon as it is printed off?"

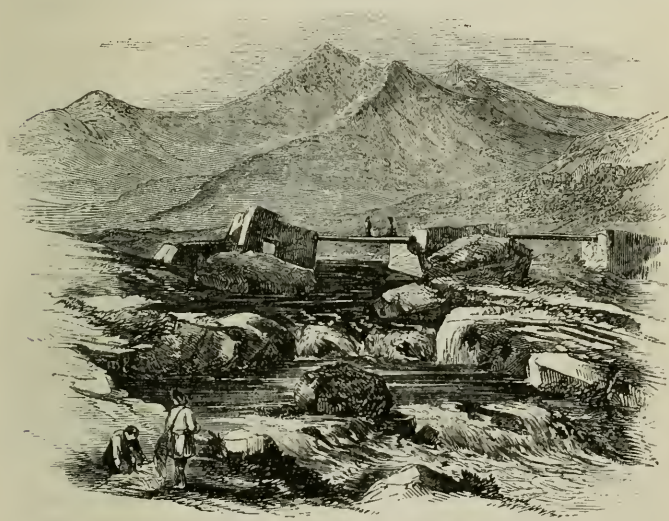
\* \* \* \* \*

## "TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

*London, October 1, 1774.*

"Yesterday I returned from my Welsh journey. I was sorry to leave my book suspended so long: but having an opportunity of seeing, with so much convenience, a new part of the island, I could not reject it. I have been in five of the six counties of North Wales; and have seen St. Asaph and Bangor, the



SNOWDON.

two seats of their Bishops; have been upon Penmanmaur and Snowdon, and passed over into Anglesea. But Wales is so little different from England, that it offers nothing to the speculation of the traveller.

"When I came home, I found several of your papers, with some pages of Lord Hailes's 'Annals,' which I will consider. I am in haste to give you some account of myself, lest you should suspect me of negligence in the pressing

business which I find recommended to my care, and which I knew nothing of till now, when all care is vain.<sup>1</sup>

“In the distribution of my books I propose to follow your advice, adding such as shall occur to me. I am not pleased with your notes of remembrance added to your names, for I hope I shall not easily forget them.

“I have received four Erse books, without any direction, and suspect that they are intended for the Oxford library. If that is the intention, I think it will be proper to add the metrical psalms, and whatever else is printed in Erse, that the present may be complete. The donor's name should be told.

“I wish you could have read the book before it was printed, but our distance does not easily permit it.

“I am sorry Lord Hailes does not intend to publish Walton; I am afraid it will not be done so well, if it be done at all.

“I purpose now to drive the book forward. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and let me hear often from you.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your affectionate humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

This tour to Wales, which was made in company with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, though it no doubt contributed to his health and amusement, did not give an occasion to such a discursive exercise of his mind as our tour to the Hebrides. I do not find that he kept any journal or notes of what he saw there. All that I heard him say of it was, that “instead of bleak and barren mountains, there were green and fertile ones; and that one of the castles in Wales would contain all the castles that he had seen in Scotland.”

Parliament having been dissolved, and his friend Mr. Thrale, who was a steady supporter of government, having again to encounter the storm of a contested election, he wrote a short political pamphlet, entitled “The Patriot,” addressed to the electors of Great Britain; a title which, to factious men who consider a patriot only as an opposer of the measures of government, will appear strangely misapplied. It was, however, written with energetic vivacity; and, except those passages in which it endeavours to vindicate the glaring outrage of the House of Commons in the case of the Middlesex election, and to justify the attempt to reduce our fellow-subjects in America to unconditional submission, it contained an admirable display of the properties of a real patriot, in the original and genuine sense;—a sincere, steady, rational, and unbiassed friend to the interests and prosperity of his King and country. It must be acknowledged, however, that both in this and his two former pamphlets, there was, amidst many powerful arguments, not only a considerable portion of sophistry, but a contemptuous ridicule of his opponents, which was very provoking.

<sup>1</sup> I had written to him, to request his interposition in behalf of a convict, who I thought was very unjustly condemned.—BOSWELL.

“ TO MR. PERKINS.<sup>1</sup>

“ SIR,

*October 25, 1774.*

“ You may do me a very great favour. Mrs. Williams, a gentlewoman whom you may have seen at Mr. Thrale's, is a petitioner for Mr. Hetherington's charity : petitions are this day issued at Christ's Hospital.

“ I am a bad manager of business in a crowd ; and if I should send a mean man, he may be put away without his errand. I must therefore entreat that you will go, and ask for a petition for Anna Williams, whose paper of inquiries was delivered with answers at the counting-house of the hospital on Thursday the 20th. My servant will attend you thither, and bring the petition home when you have it.

“ The petition which they are to give us, is a form which they deliver to every petitioner, and which the petitioner is afterwards to fill up, and return to them again. This we must have, or we cannot proceed according to their directions. You need, I believe, only ask for a petition ; if they inquire for whom you ask, you can tell them.

“ I beg pardon for giving you this trouble ; but it is a matter of great importance.

I am, Sir,

“ Your most humble servant.

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

*London, Oct. 27, 1774.*

“ There has appeared lately in the papers an account of a boat upset between Mull and Ulva, in which many passengers were lost, and among them Maclean of Coll. We, you know, were once drowned ;<sup>2</sup> I hope, therefore, that the story is either wantonly or erroneously told. Pray satisfy me by the next post.

“ I have printed two hundred and forty pages. I am able to do nothing much worth doing to dear Lord Hailes's book. I will, however, send back the sheets ; and hope, by degrees, to answer all your reasonable expectations.

“ Mr. Thrale has happily surmounted a very violent and acrimonious opposition ; but all joys have their abatement—Mrs. Thrale has fallen from her horse and hurt herself very much. The rest of our friends, I believe, are well. My compliments to Mrs. Boswell.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your most affectionate servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

· Mr. Perkins was for a number of years the worthy superintendent of Mr. Thrale's great brewery, and after his death became one of the proprietors of it ; and now resides (1791) in Mr. Thrale's house in Southwark, which was the scene of so many literary meetings, and in which he continues the liberal hospitality for which it was eminent. Dr. Johnson esteemed him much. He hung up in the counting-house a fine proof of the admirable mezzotinto of Dr. Johnson, by Doughty ; and when Mrs. Thrale asked him, somewhat flippantly, “ Why do you put him up in the counting-house ? ” He answered, “ Because, Madam, I wish to have one wise man there.” “ Sir,” said Johnson, “ I thank you. It is a very handsome compliment, and I believe you speak sincerely.”—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> In the newspapers.—BOSWELL.

This letter, which shows his tender concern for an amiable young gentleman to whom he had been very much obliged in the Hebrides, I have inserted according to its date, though before receiving it I had informed him of the melancholy event that the young Laird of Coll was unfortunately drowned.

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

Nov. 26, 1774.

“ Last night I corrected the last page of our ‘Journey to the Hebrides.’ The printer has detained it all this time, for I had, before I went into Wales, written all except two sheets. ‘The Patriot’ was called for by my political friends on Friday, was written on Saturday, and I have heard little of it. So vague are conjectures at a distance.<sup>1</sup> As soon as I can, I will take care that copies be sent to you, for I would wish that they might be given before they are bought: but I am afraid that Mr. Strahan will send to you and to the book-sellers at the same time. Trade is as diligent as courtesy. I have mentioned all that you recommended. Pray make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell and the younglings. The club has, I think, not yet met.

“ Tell me, and tell me honestly, what you think and what others say of our travels. Shall we touch the continent?<sup>2</sup>

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

In his manuscript diary of this year, there is the following entry:—

“ Nov. 27. Advent Sunday. I considered that this day, being the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, was a proper time for a new course of life. I began to read the Greek Testament regularly, at one hundred and sixty verses every Sunday. This day I began the Acts.

“ In this week I read Virgil’s Pastorals. I learned to repeat the Pollio and Gallus. I read carelessly the first Georgic.”

Such evidences of his unceasing ardour, both for “divine and human lore,” when advanced into his sixty-fifth year, and notwithstanding his many disturbances from disease, must make us at once honour his spirit, and lament that it should be so grievously clogged by its material tegument. It is remarkable, that he was very fond of the precision which calculation produces. Thus we find in one of his manuscript diaries, “12 pages in 4to Gr. Test. and 30 pages in Beza’s folio, comprise the whole in 40 days.”

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to a passage in a letter of mine, where speaking of his “Journey to the Hebrides,” I say, “But has not ‘The Patriot’ been an interruption, by the time taken to write it, and the time luxuriously spent in listening to its applauses?”—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> We had projected a voyage together up the Baltic, and talked of visiting some of the more northern regions.—BOSWELL.

“ DR. JOHNSON TO JOHN HOOLE, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

*December 19, 1774.*

“ I have returned your play,<sup>1</sup> which you will find underscored with red, where there was a word which I did not like. The red will be washed off with a little water.

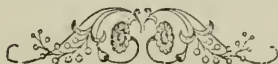
“ The plot is so well framed, the intricacy so artful, and the disentanglement so easy, the suspense so affecting, and the passionate parts so properly interposed, that I have no doubt of its success.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

<sup>1</sup> “ Cleonice.”—BOSWELL.





JAMES MACPHERSON.

## CHAPTER IX.—1775.

JOHNSON WRITES "PROPOSALS FOR PUBLISHING THE WORKS OF MRS. CHARLOTTE LENNOX," AND PREFACE TO BARETTI'S "EASY LESSONS"—CORRESPONDENCE WITH BOSWELL, AND WRITES LATIN INSCRIPTION FOR HIS PICTURE OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS—QUESTIONS THE AUTHENTICITY OF OSSIAN'S POEMS, AND REPLIES TO AN ANGRY LETTER FROM MACPHERSON—JOHNSON'S PERSONAL COURAGE—DEFEATS FOOTE'S INTENDED MIMICRY—"JOURNEY TO THE WESTERN ISLANDS" PUBLISHED, AND SCOTTISH JEALOUSY AROUSED—THE OSSIAN CONTROVERSY.

THE first effort of his pen in 1775 was, "Proposals for publishing the Works of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox," in three volumes quarto. In his diary, January 2, I find this entry—"Wrote Charlotte's Proposals." But, indeed, the internal evidence would have been quite sufficient. Her claim to the favour of the public was thus enforced:—

"Most of the pieces, as they appeared singly, have been read with approbation, perhaps above their merits, but of no great advantage to the writer. She hopes, therefore, that she shall not be considered as too indulgent to vanity, or too studious of interest, if from that labour which has hitherto been chiefly gainful to others, she endeavours to obtain at last some profit to herself and her children. She cannot decently enforce her claim by the praise of her own performances; nor can she suppose, that, by the most artful and laboured address, an additional notice could be procured to a publication, of which HER MAJESTY has condescended to be the PATRONESS."

He this year also wrote the preface to Baretti's "Easy Lessons in Italian and English."

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

January 14, 1775.

“ You never did ask for a book by the post till now, and I did not think on it. You see now it is done. I sent one to the King, and I hear he likes it.

“ I shall send a parcel into Scotland for presents, and intend to give to many of my friends. In your catalogue you left out Lord Auchinleck.

“ Let me know, as fast as you read it, how you like it; and let me know if any mistake is committed, or anything important left out. I wish you could have seen the sheets. My compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and to Veronica, and to all my friends.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

“ *Edinburgh, Jan. 19, 1775.*

“ BE pleased to accept of my best thanks for your ‘Journey to the Hebrides, which came to me by last night’s post. I did really ask the favour twice; but you have been even with me by granting it so speedily. *Bis dat qui cito dat.* Though ill of a bad cold, you kept me up the greatest part of last night; for I did not stop till I had read every word of your book. I looked back to our first talking of a visit to the Hebrides, which was many years ago, when sitting by ourselves in the Mitre tavern in London, I think about *witching time o’ night*: and then exulted in contemplating our scheme fulfilled, and a *monumentum revere* of it erected by your superior abilities. I shall only say, that your book has afforded me a high gratification. I shall afterwards give you my thoughts on particular passages. In the mean time, I hasten to tell you of your having mistaken two names, which you will correct in London, as I shall do here, that the gentlemen who deserve the valuable compliments which you have paid them, may enjoy their honours. In page 106, for *Gordon* read *Murchison*; and in page 357, for *Maclean* read *Macleod*.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ But I am now to apply to you for immediate aid in my profession, which you have never refused to grant when I requested it. I inclose you a petition for Dr. Memis, a physician at Aberdeen, in which Sir John Dalrymple has exerted his talents, and which I am to answer as counsel for the managers of the Royal Infirmary in that city. Mr. Jopp, the Provost, who delivered to you your freedom, is one of my clients, and *as a citizen of Aberdeen*, you will support him.

“ The fact is shortly this. In a translation of the charter of the Infirmary from Latin into English, made under the authority of the managers, the same phrase in the original is in one place rendered *Physician*, but when applied to Dr. Memis is rendered *Doctor of Medicine*. Dr. Memis complained of this before the translation was printed, but was not indulged in having it altered; and he has brought an action for damages, on account of a supposed injury, as if the designation given to him was an inferior one, tending to

make it be supposed he is *not a Physician*, and consequently to hurt his practice. My father has dismissed the action as groundless, and now he has appealed to the whole court." <sup>1</sup>

" TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" DEAR SIR,

Jan. 1, 1775.

" I long to hear how you like the book ; it is, I think, much liked here. But Macpherson is very furious ; can you give me any more intelligence about him, or his Fingal ? Do what you can, and do it quickly. Is Lord Hailes on our side ?

" Pray let me know what I owed you when I left you, that I may send it to you.

" I am going to write about the Americans. If you have picked up any hints among your lawyers, who are great masters of the law of nations, or if your own mind suggest anything, let me know. But mum, it is a secret.

" I will send your parcel of books as soon as I can ; but I cannot do as I wish. However, you find everything mentioned in the book which you recommended.

" Langton is here ; we are all that ever we were. He is a worthy fellow, without malice, though not without resentment.

" Poor Beauclerk is so ill, that his life is thought to be in danger. Lady Di nurses him with very great assiduity.

" Reynolds has taken too much to strong liquor,<sup>2</sup> and seems to delight in his new character.

" This is all the news that I have ; but as you love verses, I will send you a few which I made upon Inch Kenneth ;<sup>3</sup> but remember the condition, you shall not show them, except to Lord Hailes, whom I love better than any man whom I know so little. If he asks you to transcribe them for him, you may do it, but I think he must promise not to let them be copied again, nor to show them as mine.

" I have at last sent back Lord Hailes's sheets. I never think about returning them, because I alter nothing. You will see that I might as well have kept them. However I am ashamed of my delay ; and if I have the honour of receiving any more, promise punctually to return them by the next post. Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Boswell, and to Miss Veronica.

" I am, dear Sir,

" Yours most faithfully,

" SAM. JOHNSON."<sup>4</sup>

In the Court of Session of Scotland an action is first tried by one of the judges, who is called the Lord Ordinary : and if either party is dissatisfied, he may appeal to the whole Court, consisting of fifteen, the Lord President and fourteen other judges, who have both in and out of court the title of Lords from the name of their estates ; as, Lord Auchinleck, Lord Monboddo, &c.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> It should be recollected, that this fanciful description of his friend was given by Johnson after he himself had become a water-drinker.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> See them in "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," 3rd edit. p. 337.—BOSWELL.

<sup>4</sup> He now sent me a Latin inscription for my historical picture Mary Queen of Scots and



“MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

“*Edinburgh, Jan. 27, 1775.*

\* \* \* \* \*  
 “You rate our lawyers here too high, when you call them great masters of the law of nations.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

“As for myself, I am ashamed to say I have read little and thought little on the subject of America. I will be much obliged to you, if you direct me where I shall find the best information of what is to be said on both sides. It is a subject vast in its present extent and future consequences. The imperfect hints which now float in my mind, tend rather to the formation of an opinion that our government has been precipitant and severe in the resolutions taken against the Bostonians. Well, do you know that I have no kindness for that race. But nations or bodies of men, should, as well as individuals, have a fair trial, and not be condemned on character alone. Have we not express contracts with our colonies, which afford a more certain foundation of judgment, than general political speculations on the mutual rights of States and their provinces or colonies? Pray let me know immediately what to read, and I shall diligently endeavour to gather for you anything that I can find. Is Burke's speech on American taxation published by himself? Is it authentic? I remember to have heard you say, that you had never considered East Indian affairs; though, surely, they are of much importance to Great Britain. Under the recollection of this, I shelter myself from the reproach of ignorance about the Americans. If you write upon the subject, I shall certainly understand it. But, since you seem to expect that I should know something of it, without your instruction, and that my own mind should suggest something, I trust you will put me in the way.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

“What does Becket mean by the *Originals* of Fingal and other Poems of Ossian, which he advertises to have lain in his shop?  
 \* \* \* \* \*

afterwards favoured me with an English translation. Mr. Alderman Beydell, that eminent Patron of the Arts, has subjoined them to the engraving from my picture.

“*Maria Scotorum Regina,  
 Hominum seditiosorum  
 Contumeliis lassata,  
 Minis territa, clamoribus victa,  
 Libello, per quem  
 Regno cedit,  
 Lacrimans trepidansque  
 Nomen apponit.*

“Mary Queen of Scots,  
 Harassed, terrified, and overpowered  
 By the insults, menaces,  
 And clamours  
 Of her rebellious subjects,  
 Sets her hand,  
 With tears and confusion,  
 To a resignation of the kingdom.”—BOSWELL.

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

Jan. 28, 1775.

“ You sent me a case to consider, in which I have no facts but what are against us, nor any principles on which to reason. It is vain to write thus without materials. The fact seems to be against you; at least, I cannot know nor say anything to the contrary. I am glad that you like the book so well. I hear no more of Macpherson. I shall long to know what Lord Hailes says of it. Lend it him privately. I shall send the parcel as soon as I can. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell.

“ I am, Sir, &c.,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

“ *Edinburgh, Feb. 2, 1775.*

\* \* \* \* \*

“ As to Macpherson, I am anxious to have from yourself a full and pointed account of what has passed between you and him. It is confidently told here, that before your book came out, he sent to you, to let you know that he understood you meant to deny the authenticity of Ossian's poems; that the originals were in his possession; that you might have inspection of them, and might take the evidence of people skilled in the Erse language; and that he hoped, after this fair offer, you would not be so un candid as to assert that he had refused reasonable proof. That you paid no regard to his message, but published your strong attack upon him; and then he wrote a letter to you, in such terms as he thought suited to one who had not acted as a man of veracity. You may believe it gives me pain to hear your conduct represented as unfavourable, while I can only deny what is said, on the ground that your character refutes it, without having any information to oppose. Let me, I beg it of you, be furnished with a sufficient answer to any calumny upon this occasion.

“ Lord Hailes writes to me (for we correspond more than we talk together), ‘As to Fingal, I see a controversy arising, and purpose to keep out of its way. There is no doubt that I might mention some circumstances, but I do not choose to commit them to paper.’<sup>1</sup> What his opinion is, I do not know. He says, ‘I am singularly obliged to Dr. Johnson for his accurate and useful criticisms. Had he given some strictures on the general plan of the work, it would have added much to its favours.’ He is charmed with your verses on Inch Kenneth, says they are very elegant, but bids me tell you he doubts whether

‘ *Legitimas faciunt pectora pura preces,*

be according to the rubric. But that is your concern, for you know he is a Presbyterian.”

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<sup>1</sup> His Lordship, notwithstanding his resolution, did commit his sentiments to paper, and in one of his notes affixed to his Collection of Old Scottish Poetry, he says, that “to doubt the authenticity of those poems, is a refinement in scepticism indeed.”—J. BOSWELL, JUN.

" TO DR. LAWRENCE.<sup>1</sup>

" SIR,

Feb. 7, 1775.

" One of the Scotch physicians is now prosecuting a corporation that in some public instrument have styled him *Doctor of Medicine* instead of *Physician*. Boswell desires, being advocate for the corporation, to know whether *Doctor of Medicine* is not a legitimate title, and whether it may be considered as a disadvantageous distinction. I am to write to-night; be pleased to tell me.

" I am, Sir,

" Your most, &amp;c.,

" SAM. JOHNSON."

## " TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" MY DEAR BOSWELL,

February 7, 1775.

" I am surprised that, knowing, as you do, the disposition of your countrymen to tell lies in favour of each other,<sup>2</sup> you can be at all affected by any reports that circulate among them. Macpherson never in his life offered me a sight of any original or of any evidence of any kind;—but thought only of intimidating me by noise and threats, till my last answer,—that I would not be deterred from detecting what I thought a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian,—put an end to our correspondence.

" The state of the question is this. He and Dr. Blair, whom I consider as deceived, say that he copied the poem from old manuscripts. His copies, if he had them, and I believe him to have none, are nothing. Where are the manuscripts? They can be shown if they exist, but they were never shown. '*De non existentibus et non apparentibus,*' says our law, '*cadem est ratio.*' No man has a claim to credit upon his own word, when better evidence, if he had it, may be easily produced. But so far as we can find, the Erse language was never written till very lately for the purposes of religion. A nation that cannot write, or a language that was never written, has no manuscripts.

" But whatever he has he never offered to show. If old manuscripts should now be mentioned, I should, unless there were more evidence than can be easily had, suppose them another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood.

" Do not censure the expression; you know it to be true.

" Dr. Memis's question is so narrow as to allow no speculation; and I have no facts before me but those which his advocate has produced against you.

" I consulted this morning the President of the London College of Physicians, who says, that with us, *Doctor of Physic* (we do not say *Doctor of Medicine*) is the highest title that a practiser of physic can have; that *Doctor* implies not only *Physician*, but teacher of physic; that every *Doctor* is legally a *Physician*; but no man, not a *Doctor*, can *practise physic* but by *licence* particularly granted. The Doctorate is a licence of itself. It seems to us a very slender cause of prosecution.

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<sup>1</sup> The learned and worthy Dr. Lawrence, whom Dr. Johnson respected and loved as his physician and friend.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> My friend has, in this letter, relied upon my testimony, with a confidence, of which the ground has escaped my recollection.—BOSWELL.

"I am now engaged, but in a little time I hope to do all you would have. My compliments to Madam and Veronica.

"I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

What words were used by Mr. Macpherson in his letter to the venerable sage, I have never heard; but they are generally said to have been of a nature very different from the language of literary contest. Dr. Johnson's answer appeared in the newspapers of the day, and has since been frequently republished; but not with perfect accuracy. I give it as dictated to me by himself, written down in his presence, and authenticated by a note in his own handwriting, "*This, I think, is a true copy.*"<sup>1</sup>

"MR. JAMES MACPHERSON,

"I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

"What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Mr. Macpherson little knew the character of Dr. Johnson, if he supposed that he could be easily intimidated: for no man was ever more remarkable for personal courage. He had, indeed, an awful dread of death, or rather, "of something after death;" and what rational man, who seriously thinks of quitting all that he has ever known, and going into a new and unknown state of being, can be without that dread? But his fear was from reflection; his courage natural. His fear, in that one instance, was the result of philosophical and religious consideration. He feared death, but he feared nothing else, not even what might occasion death. Many instances of his resolution may be mentioned. One day, at Mr. Beauclerk's house in the country, when two large dogs were fighting, he went up to them, and beat them till they separated; and at another time, when told of the danger there was that a gun might burst if charged with many balls, he put in six or seven and fired it off against a wall. Mr. Langton told me, that when they were swimming together near Oxford, he cautioned Dr. Johnson against a pool, which was reckoned particularly dangerous; upon which Johnson directly swam into it. He told me himself that one night he was attacked in the street by four men, to whom he would not yield, but kept them all at bay, till

<sup>1</sup> I have deposited it in the British Museum.—BOSWELL.

the watch came up, and carried both him and them to the round-house. In the playhouse at Lichfield, as Mr. Garrick informed me, Johnson having for a moment quitted a chair which was placed for him between the side scenes, a gentleman took possession of it, and when Johnson on his return civilly demanded his seat, rudely refused to give it up; upon which Johnson laid hold of it, and tossed him and the chair into the pit. Foote, who so successfully revived the old comedy, by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage; expecting great profits from the ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's, the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr. Davies "what was the common price of an oak stick;" and being answered sixpence, "Why then, Sir," said he, "give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off*, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity." Davies took care to acquaint Foote of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimic. Mr. Macpherson's menaces made Johnson provide himself with the same implement of defence; and had he been attacked, I have no doubt that, old as he was, he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual.

His "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland" \* is a most valuable performance. It abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, and in ingenious sentiment and lively description. A considerable part of it, indeed, consists of speculations, which many years before he saw the wild regions which we visited together, probably had employed his attention, though the actual sight of those scenes undoubtedly quickened and augmented them. Mr. Orme,<sup>1</sup> the very able historian, agreed with me in this opinion, which he thus strongly expressed:—"There are in that book, thoughts, which, by long revolution in the great mind of Johnson, have been formed and polished like pebbles rolled in the ocean!"

That he was to some degree of excess a *true-born Englishman*, so as to have entertained an undue prejudice against both the country and the people of Scotland, must be allowed. But it was a prejudice of the head, and not of the heart. He had no ill-will to the Scotch; for, if he had been conscious of that, he would never have thrown himself into the bosom of their country, and trusted to the protection of its remote inhabitants with a fearless confidence. His remark upon the nakedness of the country, from its being denuded of trees, was made after having travelled two hundred miles along the Eastern coast, where certainly trees are not to be found near the road; and he said it was "a map of

<sup>1</sup> Robert Orme, author of "The History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Hindostan."

the road " which he gave. His disbelief of the authenticity of the poems ascribed to Ossian, a Highland bard, was confirmed in the course of his journey, by a very strict examination of the evidence offered for it; and although their authenticity was made too much a national point by the Scotch, there were many respectable persons in that country, who did not concur in this: so that his judgment upon the question ought not to be decided, even by those who differ from him. As to myself, I can only say, upon a subject now become very uninteresting, that when the fragments of Highland poetry first came out, I was much pleased with their wild peculiarity, and was one of those who subscribed to enable their editor, Mr. Macpherson, then a young man, to make a search in the Highlands and Hebrides for a long poem in the Erse language, which was reported to be preserved somewhere in those regions. But when there came forth an Epic Poem in six books, with all the common circumstances of former compositions of that nature; and when, upon an attentive examination of it, there was found a perpetual recurrence of the same images which appear in the fragments; and when no ancient manuscript, to authenticate the work, was deposited in any public library, though that was insisted on as a reasonable proof, *who could forbear to doubt?*

Johnson's grateful acknowledgments of kindness received in the course of this tour, completely refute the brutal reflections which have been thrown out against him, as if he had made an ungrateful return; and his delicacy in sparing in his book those who we find from his letters to Mrs. Thrale were just objects of censure, is much to be admired. His candour and amiable disposition is conspicuous from his conduct, when informed by Mr. Macleod, of Rasay, that he had committed a mistake, which gave that gentleman some uneasiness. He wrote him a courteous and kind letter, and inserted in the newspapers an advertisement, correcting the mistake.<sup>1</sup>

The observations of my friend Mr. Dempster in a letter written to me, soon after he had read Dr. Johnson's book, are so just and liberal, that they cannot be too often repeated:

\* \* \* \* \*

"There is nothing in the book, from beginning to end, that a Scotchman need to take amiss. What he says of the country is true; and his observations on the people are what must naturally occur to a sensible, observing, and reflecting inhabitant of a convenient metropolis, where a man on thirty pounds a-year may be better accommodated with all the little wants of life, than Coll or Sir Allan.

"I am charmed with his researches concerning the Erse language, and the antiquity of their manuscripts. I am quite convinced; and I shall rank Ossian and his Fingals and Oscars, amongst the nursery tales, not the true history of our country, in all time to come.

<sup>1</sup> See "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," 3rd edit. p. 520.—BOSWELL.

“Upon the whole, the book cannot displease, for it has no pretensions. The author neither says he is a geographer, nor an antiquarian, nor very learned in the history of Scotland, nor a naturalist, nor a fossilist. The manners of the people, and the face of the country, are all he attempts to describe or seems to have thought of. Much were it to be wished that they who have travelled into more remote, and of course more curious regions, had all possessed his good sense. Of the state of learning, his observations on Glasgow University show he has formed a very sound judgment. He understands our climate too; and he has accurately observed the changes, however slow and imperceptible to us, which Scotland has undergone in consequence of the blessings of liberty and internal peace.”

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Mr. Knox, another native of Scotland, who has since made the same tour, and published an account of it, is equally liberal :—

“I have read,” says he, “his book again and again, travelled with him from Berwick to Glenelg, through countries with which I am well acquainted; sailed with him from Glenelg to Rasay, Sky, Rum, Coll, Mull, and Icolmkill, but have not been able to correct him in any matter of consequence. I have often admired the accuracy, the precision, and the justness of what he advances respecting both the country and the people.

“The Doctor has everywhere delivered his sentiments with freedom, and in many instances with a seeming regard for the benefit of the inhabitants, and the ornament of the country. His remarks on the want of trees and hedges for shade, as well as for shelter to the cattle, are well founded, and merit the thanks, not the illiberal censure of the natives. He also felt for the distresses of the Highlanders, and explodes with great propriety the bad management of the grounds, and the neglect of timber in the Hebrides.”

Having quoted Johnson's just compliments on the Rasay family, he says :—

“On the other hand, I found this family equally lavish in their encomiums upon the Doctor's conversation, and his subsequent civilities to a young gentleman of that country, who, upon waiting upon him at London, was well received, and experienced all the attention and regard that a warm friend could bestow. Mr. Macleod having also been in London, waited upon the Doctor, who provided a magnificent and expensive entertainment in honour of his old Hebridean acquaintance.”

And talking of the military road by Fort Augustus, he says :—

“By this road, though one of the most rugged in Great Britain, the celebrated Dr. Johnson passed from Inverness to the Hebride Isles. His observations on the country and people are extremely correct, judicious, and instructive.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Tytler, the acute and able vindicator of Mary Queen of Scots, in one of his letters to Mr. James Elphinstone, published in that gentleman's “Forty Years' Correspondence,” says :—

<sup>1</sup> Page 103.—BOSWELL.

“I read Dr. Johnson's Tour with very great pleasure. Some few errors he has fallen into, but of no great importance, and those are lost in the numberless beauties of his work. If I had leisure, I could perhaps point out the most exceptionable places; but at present I am in the country, and have not his book at hand. It is plain he meant to speak well of Scotland; and he has, in my apprehension, done us great honour in the most capital article, the character of the inhabitants.”

His private letters to Mrs. Thrale, written during the course of his journey, which therefore may be supposed to convey his genuine feelings at the time, abound in such benignant sentiments towards the people who showed him civilities, that no man whose temper is not very harsh and sour, can retain a doubt of the goodness of his heart.

It is painful to recollect with what rancour he was assailed by numbers of shallow irritable North Britons, on account of his supposed injurious treatment of their country and countrymen, in his “Journey.” Had there been any just ground for such a charge, would the virtuous and candid Dempster have given his opinion of the book, in the terms in which I have quoted? Would the patriotic Knox<sup>1</sup> have spoken of it as he has done? Would Mr. Tytler, surely

“— a *Scot*, if ever *Scot* there were,”

have expressed himself thus? And let me add, that, citizen of the world as I hold myself to be, I have that degree of predilection for my *natale solum*, nay, I have that just sense of the merit of an ancient nation which has been ever renowned for its valour, which in former times maintained its independence against a powerful neighbour, and in modern times has been equally distinguished for its ingenuity and industry in civilised life, that I should have felt a generous indignation at any injustice done to it. Johnson treated Scotland no worse than he did even his best friends, whose characters he used to give as they appeared to him, both in light and shade. Some people, who had not exercised their minds sufficiently, condemned him for censuring his friends. But Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose philosophical penetration and justness of thinking were not less known to those who lived with him, than his genius in his art is admired by the world, explained his conduct thus:—

“He was fond of discrimination, which he could not show without pointing out the bad as well as the good in every character; and as his friends were those whose characters he knew best, they afforded him the best opportunity for showing the acuteness of his judgment.”

He expressed to his friend Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, his wonder at the extreme jealousy of the Scotch, and their resentment at having their

<sup>1</sup> I observed with much regret, while the first edition of this work was passing through the press (August, 1790), that this ingenious gentleman was dead.—BOSWELL.



country described by him as it really was ; when, to say that it was a country as good as England, would have been a great falsehood. "None of us," said he, "would be offended if a foreigner who has travelled here should say, that vines and olives don't grow in England." And as to his prejudice against the Scotch, which I always ascribed to that nationality which he observed in *them*, he said to the same gentleman, "When I find a Scotchman, to whom an Englishman is as a Scotchman, that Scotchman shall be an Englishman to me." His intimacy with many gentlemen of Scotland, and his employing so many natives of that country as his amanuenses, prove that his prejudice was not virulent ; and I have deposited in the British Museum, amongst other pieces of his writing, the following note in answer to one from me, asking if he would meet me at dinner at the Mitre, though a friend of mine, a Scotchman, was to be there :—

"Mr. Johnson does not see why Mr. Boswell should suppose a Scotchman less acceptable than any other man. He will be at the Mitre."

My much-valued friend, Dr. Barnard, now Bishop of Killaloe, having once expressed to him an apprehension, that if he should visit Ireland he might treat the people of that country more unfavourably than he had done the Scotch, he answered, with strong pointed double-edged wit, "Sir, you have no reason to be afraid of me. The Irish are not in a conspiracy to cheat the world by false representations of the merits of their countrymen. No, Sir ; the Irish are a FAIR PEOPLE ;—they never speak well of one another."

Johnson told me of an instance of Scottish nationality, which made a very unfavourable impression upon his mind. A Scotchman of some consideration in London, solicited him to recommend by the weight of his learned authority, to be master of an English school, a person of whom he who recommended him confessed he knew no more but that he was his countryman. Johnson was shocked at this unconscientious conduct.

All the miserable cavillings against his "Journey," in newspapers, magazines, and other fugitive publications, I can speak from certain knowledge, only furnished him with sport. At last there came out a scurrilous volume, larger than Johnson's own, filled with malignant abuse, under a name, real or fictitious, of some low man, in an obscure corner of Scotland, though supposed to be the work of another Scotchman, who has found means to make himself well known both in Scotland and England. The effect which it had upon Johnson was, to produce this pleasant observation to Mr. Seward, to whom he lent the book ; "This fellow must be a blockhead. They don't know how to go about their abuse. Who will read a five shilling book against me ? No, Sir, if they had wit, they should have kept pelting me with pamphlets."

“ MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

“ *Edinburgh, Feb. 18, 1775.*

“ You would have been very well pleased if you had dined with me to-day. I had for my guests, Macquharrie, young Maclean of Coll, the successor of our friend, a very amiable man, though not marked with such active qualities as his brother; Mr. Maclean of Torloisk in Mull, a gentleman of Sir Allan's family: and two of the clan Grant; so that the Highland and Hebridean genius reigned. We had a great deal of conversation about you, and drank your health in a bumper. The toast was not proposed by me, which is a circumstance to be remarked, for I am now so connected with you, that anything that I say or do to your honour has not the value of an additional compliment. It is only giving you a guinea out of that treasure of admiration which already belongs to you, and which is no hidden treasure; for I suppose my admiration of you is co-existent with the knowledge of my character.

“ I find that the Highlanders and Hebrideans in general are much fonder of your ‘Journey,’ than the low-country or *hither* Scots. One of the Grants said to-day, that he was sure you were a man of a good heart, and a candid man, and seemed to hope that he should be able to convince you of the antiquity of a good proportion of the poems of Ossian. After all that has passed, I think the matter is capable of being proved to a certain degree. I am told that Macpherson got one old Erse MS. from Clanranald, for the restitution of which he executed a formal obligation; and it is affirmed, that the Gaelic (call it Erse or call it Irish) has been written in the Highlands and Hebrides for many centuries. It is reasonable to suppose, that such of the inhabitants as acquired any learning, possessed the art of writing as well as their Irish neighbours and Celtic cousins; and the question is, can sufficient evidence be shown of this?

“ Those who are skilled in ancient writings can determine the age of MSS., or at least can ascertain the century in which they were written; and if men of veracity, who are so skilled, shall tell us that MSS. in the possession of families in the Highlands and the isles, are the works of a remote age, I think we should be convinced by their testimony.

“ There is now come to this city Ranald Macdonald, from the Isle of Egg, who has several MSS. of Erse poetry, which he wishes to publish by subscription. I have engaged to take three copies of the book, the price of which is to be six shillings, as I would subscribe for all the Erse that can be printed, be it old or new, that the language may be preserved. This man says, that some of his manuscripts are ancient; and, to be sure, one of them which was shown to me does appear to have the duskiness of antiquity.

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“ The inquiry is not yet quite hopeless, and I should think that the exact truth may be discovered, if proper means be used.

“ I am, &c.,

“ JAMES BOSWELL.”

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

Feb. 25, 1775.

“ I am sorry that I could get no books for my friends in Scotland. Mr. Strahan has at last promised to send two dozen to you. If they come put the names of my friends into them : you may cut them out,<sup>1</sup> and paste them with a little starch in the book.

“ You then are going wild about Ossian. Why do you think any part can be proved? The dusky manuscript of Egg is probably not fifty years old ; if it be an hundred, it proves nothing. The tale of Clanranald is no proof. Has Clanranald told it? Can he prove it? There are, I believe, no Erse manuscripts. None of the old families had a single letter in Erse that we heard of. You say it is likely that they could write. The learned, if any learned there were, could ; but knowing, by that learning, some written language, in that language they wrote, as letters had never been applied to their own. If there are manuscripts, let them be shown, with some proof that they are not forged for the occasion. You say many can remember parts of Ossian. I believe all those parts are versions of the English ; at least there is no proof of their antiquity.

“ Macpherson is said to have made some translations himself ; and having taught a boy to write it, ordered him to say that he had learned it of his grandmother. The boy, when he grew up, told the story. This Mrs. Williams heard at Mr. Strahan's table. Don't be credulous ; you know how little a Highlander can be trusted. Macpherson is, so far as I know, very quiet. Is not that proof enough? Everything is against him. No visible manuscript : no inscription in the language : no correspondence among friends : no transaction of business, of which a single scrap remains in the ancient families. Macpherson's pretence is, that the character was Saxon. If he had not talked unskilfully of *manuscripts*, he might have fought with oral tradition much longer. As to Mr. Grant's information, I suppose he knows much less of the matter than ourselves.

“ In the mean time, the bookseller says that the sale<sup>2</sup> is sufficiently quick. They printed four thousand. Correct your copy wherever it is wrong, and bring it up. Your friends will all be glad to see you. I think of going myself into the country about May,

“ I am sorry that I have not managed to send the book sooner. I have left four for you, and do not restrict you absolutely to follow my directions in the distribution. You must use your own discretion.

“ Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell : I suppose she is now beginning to forgive me. I am, dear Sir, your humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

From a list in his handwriting.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Of his “ Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.”



EXTERIOR OF DRURY LANE THEATRE.—1775.

## CHAPTER X.—1775.

BOSWELL RE-VISITS LONDON—JOHNSON PUBLISHES HIS PAMPHLET "TAXATION NO TYRANNY"  
 —DR. TOWERS'S REPLY—JOHNSON AND BOSWELL VISIT MR. STRAHAN—GARRICK'S IMITATIONS—GRAY'S ODES—JOHNSON RECEIVES HIS DIPLOMA OF LL.D.—BRUCE, THE ABYSSINIAN TRAVELLER—JOHNSON'S OPINION OF PUBLIC SPEAKERS—HIS CONTEMPT FOR COLLEY CIBBER—CONVIVIAL DINNERS—"LILLIBURLERO"—PATRIOTISM—ADVISES GENERAL OGLETHORPE TO PUBLISH HIS LIFE.

ON Tuesday, March 21, I arrived in London; and on repairing to Dr. Johnson's before dinner, found him in his study, sitting with Mr. Peter Garrick, the elder brother of David, strongly resembling him in countenance and voice, but of more sedate and placid manners. Johnson informed me, that though Mr. Beauclerk was in great pain it was hoped he was not in danger, and that he now wished to consult Dr. Heberden, to try the effect of a "*new understanding*." Both at this interview, and in the evening at Mr. Thrale's, where he and Mr. Peter Garrick and I met again, he was vehement on the subject of the Ossian controversy; observing, "We do not know that there are any ancient Erse manuscripts: and we have no other reason to disbelieve that there are men with three heads, but that we do not know that there are any

such men." He also was outrageous upon his supposition that my countrymen "loved Scotland better than truth," saying "All of them—nay, not all, but *droves* of them—would come up, and attest any thing for the honour of Scotland." He also persevered in his wild allegation, that he questioned if there was a tree between Edinburgh and the English border older than himself. I assured him he was mistaken, and suggested that the proper punishment would be, that he should receive a stripe at every tree above a hundred years old, that was found within that space. He laughed, and said, "I believe I might submit to it for a *baubee*!"

The doubts which, in my correspondence with him, I had ventured to state as to the justice and wisdom of the conduct of Great Britain towards the American colonies, while I at the same time requested that he would enable me to inform myself upon that momentous subject, he had altogether disregarded; and had recently published a pamphlet, entitled, "Taxation no Tyranny: an answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress."\*

He had long before indulged most unfavourable sentiments of our fellow-subjects in America. For, as early as 1769, I was told by Dr. John Campbell, that he had said of them, "Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging."

Of this performance I avoided to talk with him; for I had now formed a clear and settled opinion, that the people of America were well warranted to resist a claim that their fellow-subjects in the mother-country should have the entire command of their fortunes, by taxing them without their own consent; and the extreme violence which it breathed, appeared to me so unsuitable to the mildness of a Christian philosopher, and so directly opposite to the principles of peace, which he had so beautifully recommended in his pamphlet respecting Falkland's Islands, that I was sorry to see him appear in so unfavourable a light. Besides, I could not perceive in it that ability of argument, or that felicity of expression, for which he was, upon other occasions, so eminent. Positive assertion, sarcastical severity, and extravagant ridicule, which he himself reprobated as a test of truth, were united in this rhapsody.

That this pamphlet was written at the desire of those who were then in power, I have no doubt; and, indeed, he owned to me, that it had been revised and curtailed by some of them. He told me, that they had struck out one passage, which was to this effect:—

"That the colonists could with no solidity argue from their not having been taxed while in their infancy, that they should not now be taxed. We do not put a calf into the plough; we wait till he is an ox."

He said, "They struck it out either critically as too ludicrous, or

politically as too exasperating. I care not which. It was their business. If an architect says, I will build five stories, and the man who employs him says, I will have only three, the employer is to decide." "Yes, Sir," said I, "in ordinary cases. But should it be so when the architect gives his skill and labour *gratis*?"

Unfavourable as I am constrained to say my opinion of this pamphlet was, yet, since it was congenial with the sentiments of numbers at that time, and as everything relating to the writings of Dr. Johnson is of importance in literary history, I shall therefore insert some passages which were struck out, it does not appear why, either by himself or those who revised it. They appear printed in a few proof leaves of it in my possession, marked with corrections in his own handwriting. I shall distinguish them by *italics*.

In the paragraph where he says, the Americans were incited to resistance by European intelligence from

"men whom they thought their friends, but who were friends only to themselves," there followed,—

*"and made by their selfishness, the enemies of their country."*

And the next paragraph ran thus:—

*"On the original contrivers of mischief, rather than on those whom they have deluded, let an insulted nation pour out its vengeance."*

The paragraph which came next was in these words:—

*"Unhappy is that country in which men can hope for advancement by favouring its enemies. The tranquillity of stable government is not always easily preserved against the machinations of single innovators; but what can be the hope of quiet, when factions hostile to the legislature can be openly formed and openly avowed?"*

After the paragraph which now concludes the pamphlet, there followed this, in which he certainly means the great Earl of Chatham, and glances at a certain popular Lord Chancellor:—

*"If, by the fortune of war, they drive us utterly away, what they will do next can only be conjectured. If a new monarchy is erected, they will want a KING. He who first takes into his hand the sceptre of America, should have a name of good omen. WILLIAM has been known both a conqueror and deliverer; and perhaps England, however contemned, might yet supply them with ANOTHER WILLIAM. Whigs, indeed, are not willing to be governed; and it is possible that KING WILLIAM may be strongly inclined to guide their measures: but Whigs have been cheated like other mortals, and suffered their leader to become their tyrant, under the name of their PROTECTOR. What more they will receive from England, no man can tell. In their rudiments of empire they may want a CHANCELLOR."*

Then came this paragraph:—

*"Their numbers are, at present, not quite sufficient for the greatness which, in some form of government or other, is to rival the ancient monarchies; but by Dr. Franklin's rule of progression, they will, in a century and a quarter, be more than equal to the inhabitants of Europe. When the Whigs of America are thus*

*multiplied, let the Princes of the earth tremble in their palaces. If they should continue to double and to double, their own hemisphere would not contain them. But let not our boldest oppugners of authority look forward with delight to this futurity of Whiggism."*

How it ended I know not, as it is cut off abruptly at the foot of the last of these proof pages.

His pamphlets in support of the measures of administration were published on his own account, and he afterwards collected them into a volume, with the title of "Political Tracts, by the Author of the Rambler," with this motto:—

*"Fallitur egregio quisquis sub Principe credit  
Servitium ; nunquam libertas gratior extat  
Quam sub Rege pio."*—CLAUDIUS.

These pamphlets drew upon him numerous attacks. Against the common weapons of literary warfare he was hardened ; but there were two instances of animadversion which I communicated to him, and from what I could judge, both from his silence and his looks, appeared to me to impress him much.

One was, "A Letter to Dr. Samuel Johnson, occasioned by his late political Publications." It appeared previous to his "Taxation no Tyranny," and was written by Dr. Joseph Towers. In that performance, Dr. Johnson was treated with the respect due to so eminent a man, whilst his conduct as a political writer was boldly and pointedly arraigned, as inconsistent with the character of one, who, if he did employ his pen upon politics,

"it might reasonably be expected should distinguish himself, not by party violence and rancour, but by moderation and by wisdom."

It concluded thus :—

"I would, however, wish you to remember, should you again address the public under the character of a political writer, that luxuriance of imagination or energy of language, will ill compensate for the want of candour, of justice, and of truth. And I shall only add, that should I hereafter be disposed to read, as I heretofore have done, the most excellent of all your performances. 'The Rambler,' the pleasure which I have been accustomed to find in it will be much diminished by the reflection that the writer of so moral, so elegant, and so valuable a work, was capable of prostituting his talents in such productions as 'The False Alarm,' the 'Thoughts on the Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands,' and 'The Patriot.'"

I am willing to do justice to the merit of Dr. Towers, of whom I will say, that although I abhor his Whiggish democratical notions and propensities (for I will not call them principles), I esteem him as an ingenious, knowing, and very convivial man.

The other instance was a paragraph of a letter to me, from my old and most intimate friend the Reverend Mr. Temple, who wrote the character of Gray, which has had the honour to be adopted both by

Mr. Mason and Dr. Johnson in their accounts of that poet. The words were—

“How can your great, I will not say your *pious*, but your *moral* friend, support the barbarous measures of administration, which they have not the face to ask even their infidel pensioner Hume to defend?”

However confident of the rectitude of his own mind, Johnson may have felt sincere uneasiness that his conduct should be erroneously imputed to unworthy motives, by good men; and that the influence of his valuable writings should on that account be in any degree obstructed or lessened.

He complained to a right honourable friend of distinguished talents and very elegant manners, with whom he maintained a long intimacy, and whose generosity towards him will afterwards appear, that his pension having been given to him as a literary character, he had been applied to by the administration to write political pamphlets; and he was even so much irritated, that he declared his resolution to resign his pension. His friend showed him the impropriety of such a measure, and he afterwards expressed his gratitude, and said he had received good advice. To that friend he once signified a wish to have his pension secured to him for life; but he neither asked nor received from government any reward whatsoever for his political labours.

On Friday, March 24, I met him at the LITERARY CLUB, where were Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Mr. Colman, Dr. Percy, Mr. Vesey, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr. George Fordyce, Mr. Steevens, and Mr. Charles Fox. Before he came in, we talked of his “Journey to the Western Islands,” and of his coming away, “willing to believe the second sight,” which seemed to excite some ridicule. I was then so impressed with the truth of many of the stories of which I had been told, that I avowed my conviction, saying, “He is only *willing* to believe: I *do* believe. The evidence is enough for me, though not for



GEORGE COLMAN.

his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle, will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief.” “Are you?” said Colman; “then cork it up.”

I found his “Journey” the common topic of conversation in London at this time, wherever I happened to be. At one of Lord Mansfield’s formal Sunday evening conversations, strangely called *Levées*, his



Lordship addressed me, "We have all been reading your travels, Mr. Boswell." I answered, "I was but the humble attendant of Dr. Johnson." The Chief-Justice replied, with that air and manner which none, who ever saw and heard him, can forget, "He speaks ill of nobody but Ossian."

Johnson was in high spirits this evening at the Club, and talked with great animation and success. He attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions. "The 'Tale of a Tub' is so much superior to his other writings, that one can hardly believe he was the author of it: <sup>1</sup> there is in it such a vigour of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life." I wondered to hear him say of "Gulliver's Travels," "When once you have thought of big men and little men, it is very easy to do all the rest." I endeavoured to make a stand for Swift, and tried to rouse those who were much more able to defend him; but in vain. Johnson at last, of his own accord, allowed very great merit to the inventory of articles found in the pocket of "The Man Mountain," particularly the description of his watch, which it was conjectured was his God, as he consulted it upon all occasions. He observed, that "Swift put his name to but two things (after he had a name to put), 'The Plan for the Improvement of the English Language,' and the last 'Drapier's Letter.'"

From Swift, there was an easy transition to Mr. Thomas Sheridan. JOHNSON: "Sheridan is a wonderful admirer of the tragedy of Douglas, and presented its author with a gold medal. Some years ago, at a coffee-house in Oxford, I called to him, 'Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Sheridan, how came you to give a gold medal to Home, for writing that foolish play?' This, you see, was wanton and insolent; but I *meant* to be wanton and insolent. A medal has no value but as a stamp of merit. And was Sheridan to assume to himself the right of giving that stamp? If Sheridan was magnificent enough to bestow a gold medal as an honorary reward of dramatic excellence, he should have requested one of the Universities to choose the person on whom it should be conferred. Sheridan had no right to give a stamp of merit: it was counterfeiting Apollo's coin."

<sup>1</sup> This doubt has been much agitated on both sides, I think without good reason. See Addison's "Freeholder," May 4, 1714; "An Apology for the Tale of a Tub;" Dr. Hawkesworth's "Preface to Swift's Works," and Swift's "Letter to Tooke the Printer," and Tooke's "Answer" in that collection; Sheridan's "Life of Swift;" Mr. Conrtenay's note on p. 3 of his "Poetical Review of the Literary and Moral Character of Dr. Johnson;" and Mr. Cooksey's "Essay on the Life and Character of John Lord Somers, Baron of Evesham."

Dr. Johnson here speaks only to the *internal evidence*. I take leave to differ from him, having a very high estimation of the powers of Dr. Swift. His "Sentiments of a Church-of-England man;" his "Sermon on the Trinity," and other serious pieces, prove his learning as well as his acuteness in logic and metaphysics; and his various compositions of a different cast exhibit not only wit, humour, and ridicule; but a knowledge "of nature, and art, and life;" a combination therefore of those powers, when (as the "Apology" says) "the author was young, his invention at the height, and his reading fresh in his head," might surely produce "*The Tale of a Tub*."—BOSWELL.

On Monday, March 27, I breakfasted with him at Mr. Strahan's. He told us, that he was engaged to go that evening to Mrs. Abington's benefit. "She was visiting some ladies whom I was visiting, and begged that I would come to her benefit. I told her I could not hear: but she insisted so much on my coming, that it would have been brutal to have refused her." This was a speech quite characteristical. He loved to bring forward his having been in the gay circles of life; and he



MRS. ABINGTON.

was, perhaps, a little vain of the solicitations of this elegant and fashionable actress. He told us, the play was to be "The Hypocrite," altered from Cibber's "Nonjuror," so as to satirise the Methodists. "I do not think," said he, "the character of the Hypocrite justly applicable to the Methodists, but it was very applicable to the Nonjurors. I once said to Dr. Madan, a clergyman of Ireland, who was a great Whig, that perhaps a Nonjuror would have been less criminal in taking the oaths imposed by the ruling power, than refusing them; because refusing them, necessarily laid him under almost an irresistible temptation to be more

criminal; for, a man *must* live, and if he precludes himself from the support furnished by the establishment, will probably be reduced to very wicked shifts to maintain himself."<sup>1</sup> BOSWELL: "I should think, Sir, that a man who took the oaths contrary to his principles, was a

· This was not merely a cursory remark; for in his "Life of Fenton" he observes, "With many other wise and virtuous men, who at that time of discord and debate [about the beginning of this century], consulted conscience well or ill informed, more than interest, he doubted the legality of the government; and refusing to qualify himself for public employment, by taking the oaths required, left the University without a degree." This conduct Johnson calls "perverseness of integrity."

The question concerning the morality of taking oaths, of whatever kind, imposed by the prevailing power at the time, rather than to be excluded from all consequence, or even any considerable usefulness in society, has been agitated with all the acuteness of casuistry. It is related, that he who devised the oath of abjuration, profligately boasted, that he had framed a test which should "damn one half of the nation, and starve the other." Upon minds not exalted to inflexible rectitude, or minds in which zeal for a party is predominant to excess, taking that oath against conviction, may have been palliated under the plea of necessity, or ventured upon in heat, as upon the whole producing more good than evil.

At a county election in Scotland, many years ago, when there was a warm contest between the friends of the Hanoverian succession, and those against it, the oath of abjuration having been demanded, the freeholders upon one side rose to go away. Upon which a very sanguine gentleman, one of their number, ran to the door to stop them, calling out with much earnestness, "Stay, stay, my friends, and let us swear the rogues out of it."—BOSWELL.

determined wicked man, because he was sure he was committing perjury, whereas a Nonjuror might be insensibly led to do what was wrong, without being so directly conscious of it." JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, a man who goes to bed to his patron's wife, is pretty sure that he is committing wickedness." BOSWELL: "Did the nonjuring clergymen do so, Sir?" JOHNSON: "I am afraid many of them did."

I was startled at this argument, and could by no means think it convincing. Had not his own father complied with the requisition of government (as to which he once observed to me, when I pressed him upon it, "*That, Sir, he was to settle with himself,*") he would probably have thought more unfavourably of a Jacobite who took the oaths:—

"—————had he not resembled  
My father as he *swore*."

Mr. Strahan talked of launching into the great ocean of London, in order to have a chance for rising into eminence; and, observing that many men were kept back from trying their fortunes there, because they were born to a competency, said, "Small certainties are the bane of men of talents;" which Johnson confirmed. Mr. Strahan put Johnson in mind of a remark which he had made to him; "There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money." "The more one thinks of this," said Strahan, "the juster it will appear."

Mr. Strahan had taken a poor boy from the country as an apprentice, upon Johnson's recommendation. Johnson having inquired after him, said, "Mr. Strahan, let me have five guineas on account, and I'll give this boy one. Nay, if a man recommends a boy, and does nothing for him, it is sad work. Call him down."

I followed him into the court-yard, behind Mr. Strahan's house; and there I had a proof of what I had heard him profess, that he talked alike to all. "Some people tell you that they let themselves down to the capacity of their hearers. I never do that. I speak uniformly, in as intelligible a manner as I can."

"Well, my boy, how do you go on?" "Pretty well, Sir; but they are afraid I an't strong enough for some parts of the business." JOHNSON: "Why, I shall be sorry for it; for when you consider with how little mental power and corporeal labour a printer can get a guinea a week, it is a very desirable occupation for you. Do you hear—take all the pains you can; and if this does not do, we must think of some other way of life for you. There's a guinea."

Here was one of the many, many instances of his active benevolence. At the same time, the slow and sonorous solemnity with which, while he bent himself down, he addressed a little thick short-legged boy, contrasted with the boy's awkwardness and awe could not but excite some ludicrous emotions.

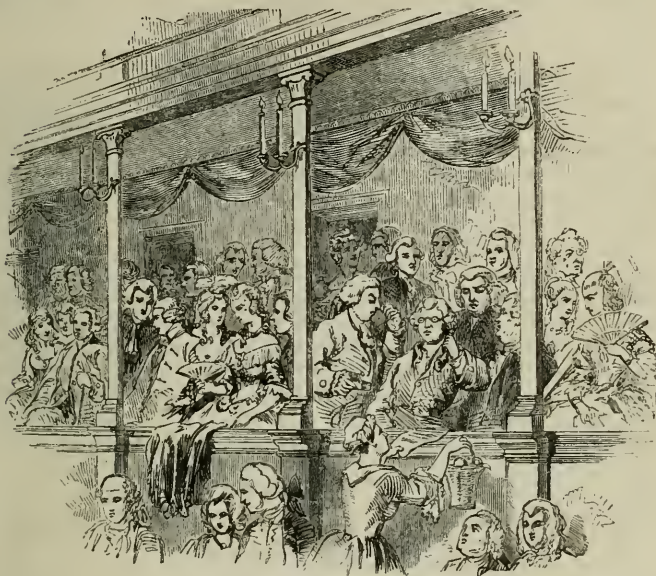
I met him at Drury-lane playhouse in the evening. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at Mrs. Abington's request, had promised to bring a body of wits to her benefit; and having secured forty places in the front



COURT-YARD OF MR. STRAHAN'S HOUSE.

boxes, had done me the honour to put me in the group. Johnson sat on the seat directly behind me; and as he could neither see nor hear at such a distance from the stage, he was wrapped up in grave abstraction, and seemed quite a cloud amidst all the sunshine of glitter and gaiety. I wondered at his patience in sitting out a play of five acts, and a farce of two. He said very little; but after the prologue to "Bon Ton" had been spoken, which he could hear pretty well from the more slow and distinct utterance, he talked on prologue writing, and observed, "Dryden has written prologues superior to any that David Garrick has written; but David Garrick has written more good prologues than Dryden has done. It is wonderful that he has been able to write such variety of them."

At Mr. Beauclerk's, where I supped, was Mr. Garrick, whom I made happy with Johnson's praise of his prologues; and I suppose, in gratitude to him, he took up one of his favourite topics—the nationality of the Scotch—which he maintained in a pleasant manner, with the



JOHNSON AT MRS. ABINGTON'S BENEFIT.

aid of a little poetical fiction. "Come, come, don't deny it: they are really national. Why, now, the Adams<sup>1</sup> are as liberal-minded men as any in the world: but, I don't know how it is, all their workmen are Scotch. You are, to be sure, wonderfully free from that nationality; but so it happens, that you employ the only Scotch shoe-black in London." He imitated the manner of his old master with ludicrous exaggeration; repeating, with pauses and half-whistlings interjected,

*"Os homini sublime dedit,—cælumque tucri  
Jussit,—et erectos ad sidera—tollere vultus:"*

looking downwards all the time, and, while pronouncing the four last words, absolutely touching the ground with a kind of contorted gesticulation.

Garrick, however, when he pleased, could imitate Johnson very

<sup>1</sup> Architects of the *Adelphi buildings*.—Ed.

exactly; for that great actor, with his distinguished powers of expression which were so universally admired, possessed also an admirable talent of mimicry. He was always jealous that Johnson spoke lightly of him. I recollect his exhibiting him to me one day, as if saying, "Davy has some convivial pleasantry about him, but 'tis a futile fellow;" which he uttered perfectly with the tone and air of Johnson.

I cannot too frequently request of my readers, while they peruse my account of Johnson's conversation, to endeavour to keep in mind his deliberate and strong utterance. His mode of speaking was indeed very impressive;<sup>1</sup> and I wish it could be preserved as music is written, according to the very ingenious method of Mr. Steele,<sup>2</sup> who has shown how the recitation of Mr. Garrick, and other eminent speakers, might be transmitted to posterity *in score*.<sup>3</sup>

Next day I dined with Johnson at Mr. Thrale's. He attacked Gray, calling him "a dull fellow." BOSWELL: "I understand he was reserved, and might appear dull in company; but surely he was not dull in poetry." JOHNSON: "Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him GREAT. He was a mechanical poet." He then repeated some ludicrous lines, which have escaped my memory, and said, "Is not that GREAT, like his Odes?" Mrs. Thrale maintained that his Odes were melodious; upon which he exclaimed,

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof;"—

I added, in a solemn tone,

"The winding-sheet of Edward's race.

*There is a good line.*" "Ay," said he, "and the next line is a good one (pronouncing it contemptuously),

'Give ample verge and room enough.'

<sup>1</sup> My noble friend, Lord Pembroke, said once to me at Wilton, with a happy pleasantry and some truth, that "Dr. Johnson's sayings would not appear so extraordinary, were it not for his *bow-wow way*." The sayings themselves are generally of sterling merit; but, doubtless, his *manner* was an addition to their effect; and therefore should be attended to as much as may be. It is necessary, however, to guard those who were not acquainted with him, against overcharged imitations or caricatures of his manner, which are frequently attempted, and many of which are second-hand copies from the late Mr. Henderson, the actor, who, though good mimic of some persons, did not represent Johnson correctly.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> See "*Prosodia Rationalis; or, an Essay towards establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech, to be expressed and perpetuated by peculiar Symbols.*" London, 1779.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> I use the phrase *in score*, as Dr. Johnson has explained it in his Dictionary: "*A song in SCORE*, the words with the musical notes of a song annexed." But I understand that in scientific propriety it means all the parts of a musical composition noted down in the characters by which it is exhibited to the eye of the skilful.—BOSWELL.

It was *declamation* that Steele pretended to reduce to notation by new characters. This he called the *melody of speech* not the *harmony*, which the term *in score* implies.—BURNBY.

No, Sir, there are but two good stanzas in Gray's poetry, which are in his 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard.' He then repeated the stanza,

"For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey," &c.

mistaking one word; for instead of *precincts* he said *confines*. He added, "The other stanza I forget."

A young lady who had married a man much her inferior in rank being mentioned, a question arose how a woman's relations should behave to her in such a situation; and, while I recapitulate the debate, and recollect what has since happened, I cannot but be struck in a manner that delicacy forbids me to express. While I contended that she ought to be treated with an inflexible steadiness of displeasure, Mrs. Thrale was all for mildness and forgiveness, and, according to the vulgar phrase, "making the best of a bad bargain." JOHNSON: "Madam, we must distinguish. Were I a man of rank, I would not let a daughter starve who had made a mean marriage; but having voluntarily degraded herself from the station which she was originally entitled to hold, I would support her only in that which she herself had chosen; and would not put her on a level with my other daughters. You are to consider, Madam, that it is our duty to maintain the subordination of civilized society; and when there is a gross and shameful deviation from rank, it should be punished so as to deter others from the same perversion."

After frequently considering this subject, I am more and more confirmed in what I then meant to express, and which was sanctioned by the authority and illustrated by the wisdom of Johnson; and I think it of the utmost consequence to the happiness of society, to which subordination is absolutely necessary. It is weak and contemptible, and unworthy in a parent to relax in such a case. It is sacrificing general advantage to private feelings. And let it be considered, that the claim of a daughter who has acted thus to be restored to her former situation, is either fantastical or unjust. If there be no value in the distinction of rank, what does she suffer by being kept in the situation to which she has descended? If there be a value in that distinction, it ought to be steadily maintained. If indulgence be shown to such conduct, and the offenders know that in a longer or shorter time they shall be received as well as if they had not contaminated their blood by a base alliance, the great check upon that inordinate caprice which generally occasions low marriages, will be removed, and the fair and comfortable order of improved life will be miserably disturbed.

Lord Chesterfield's letters being mentioned, Johnson said, "It was not to be wondered at that they had so great a sale, considering that they were the letters of a statesman, a wit, one who had been so much in the mouths of mankind, one long accustomed *virum volitare per ora*."

On Friday, March 31, I supped with him and some friends at a

tavern. One of the company attempted, with too much forwardness, to rally him on his late appearance at the theatre; but had reason to repent of his temerity. "Why, Sir, did you go to Mrs. Abington's benefit? Did you see?" JOHNSON: "No, Sir." "Did you hear?" JOHNSON: "No, Sir." "Why then, Sir, did you go?" JOHNSON: "Because, Sir, she is a favourite of the public; and when the public cares the thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to your benefit too."

Next morning I won a small bet from Lady Diana Beauclerk, by asking him as to one of his particularities, which her ladyship laid I durst not do. It seems he had been frequently observed at the Club to put into his pocket the Seville oranges, after he had squeezed the juice of them into the drink which he had made for himself. Beauclerk and Garrick talked of it to me, and seemed to think that he had a strange unwillingness to be discovered. We could not divine what he did with them; and this was the bold question to be put. I saw on his table the spoils of the preceding night, some fresh peels nicely scraped and cut into pieces. "Oh, Sir," said I, "I now partly see what you do with the squeezed oranges you put into your pocket at the Club." JOHNSON: "I have a great love for them." BOSWELL: "And pray, Sir, what do you do with them? You scrape them, it seems, very neatly, and what next?" JOHNSON: "Let them dry, Sir." BOSWELL: "And what next?" JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, you shall know their fate no further." BOSWELL: "Then the world must be left in the dark. It must be said," assuming a mock solemnity, "he scraped them and let them dry; but what he did with them next he never could be prevailed upon to tell." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, you should say it more emphatically:—he could not be prevailed upon, even by his dearest friends, to tell."

He had this morning received his diploma as Doctor of Laws from the University of Oxford. He did not vaunt of his new dignity, but I understood he was highly pleased with it. I shall here insert the progress and completion of that high academical honour, in the same manner as I have traced his obtaining that of Master of Arts.

" TO THE REVEREND DR. FOTHERGILL,

" Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, to be communicated to the Heads of Houses, and proposed in Convocation.

" *Downing-street, March 23, 1775.*

" MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND GENTLEMEN,—

" The honour of the degree of M.A. by diploma, formerly conferred upon MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, in consequence of his having eminently distinguished himself by the publication of a series of Essays, excellently calculated to form the manners of the people, and in which the cause of religion and morality



has been maintained and recommended by the strongest powers of argument and elegance of language, reflected an equal degree of lustre upon the University itself.

“The many learned labours which have since that time employed the attention and displayed the abilities of that great man, so much to the advancement of literature and the benefit of the community, render him worthy of more distinguished honours in the Republic of letters; and I persuade myself that I shall act agreeably to the sentiments of the whole University, in desiring that it may be proposed in Convocation to confer on him the degree of Doctor in Civil Law, by diploma, to which I readily give my consent; and am,

Mr. Vice-Chancellor and Gentlemen,

“Your affectionate friend and servant,

“NORTH.”<sup>1</sup>

#### DIPLOMA.

“*CANCELLARIUS, Magistri, et Scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis omnibus ad quos presentes Literæ pervenerint, salutem in Domino Sempiternam.*

“*SCIATIS, virum illustrem SAMUELEM JOHNSON, in omni humaniorum literarum genere eruditum, omniumque scientiarum comprehensione felicissimum, scriptis suis, ad popularium mores formandos summâ verborum elegantia ac sententiarum gravitate compositis, ita olim inclaruisse, ut dignus videretur cui ab Academiâ suâ eximia quædam laudis præmia deferrentur, quique venerabilem Magistrorum Ordinem summâ cum dignitate cõoptaretur.*

“*Cùm verò eundem clarissimum virum tot postea tantique laboris, in patriâ præsertim linguâ ornandâ et stabilindâ feliciter impensi, ita insigniverint, ut in Literarum Republicâ PRINCEPS jam et PRIMARIUS jure habeatur; Nos, CANCELLARIUS, Magistri, et Scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis, quò talis viri merita pari honoris remuneratione exequentur, et perpetuum suæ simul laudis, nostræque ergâ literas propensissimæ voluntatis extet monumentum, in solenni Convocatione Doctorum et Magistrorum Regentium, et non Regentium, prædictum SAMUELEM JOHNSON, Doctorem in Jure Civili renunciavimus et constituimus, eumque virtute præsentis Diplomatis singulis juribus, privilegiis et honoribus, ad istem gradum quâquâ pertinentibus, frui et gaudere jussimus. In cujus rei testimonium commune Universitatis Oxoniensis sigillum præsentibus apponi fecimus.*

“*Datum in Domo nostræ Convocationis die tricesimo Mensis Martii, Anno Domini Millesimo septingentesimo, septuagesimo quinto.*”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from the Convocation Register, Oxford.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> The original is in my possession. He showed me the diploma, and allowed me to read it, but would not consent to my taking a copy of it, fearing perhaps that I should blaze it abroad in his life-time. His objection to this appears from his 99th letter to Mrs. Thrale, whom in that letter he thus scolds for the grossness of her flattery of him:—“The other Oxford news is, that they have sent me a degree of Doctor of Laws, with such praises in the diploma as perhaps ought to make me ashamed; they are very like your praises. I wonder whether I shall ever show it to you.”

It is remarkable that he never, so far as I know, assumed his title of *Doctor*, but called himself *Mr. Johnson*, as appears from many of his cards or notes to myself, and I have seen many from him to other persons, in which he uniformly takes that designation.—I once observed on his table a letter directed to him with the addition of *Esquire*, and objected to it as being a designation inferior to that of *Doctor*; but he checked me, and seemed pleased with it, because, as I conjectured, he liked to be sometimes taken out of the class of literary men, and to be merely *gentel*—*un gentilhomme comme un autre*.—BOSWELL.

" *Viro Reverendo THOMÆ FOTHERGILL S.T.P. Universitatis Oxoniensis Vice-Cancellario. S. P. D.*

" SAM. JOHNSON.

" *MULTIS non est opus, ut testimonium quo, te præside, Oxoniensis nomen meum posteris commendârunt, quali animo acceperim compertum faciam. Nemo sibi placens non lætatur; nemo sibi non placet, qui vobis, literarum arbitris, placere potuit. Hoc tamen habet incommodi tantum beneficium, quod mihi nunquam posthac sine vestræ famæ detrimento vel luti liceat vel cessare; semperque sit timendum ne quod mihi tam eximie laudi est, vobis aliquando fiat opprobrio. Vale.*<sup>1</sup>

" 7. Id. Apr. 1775."

He revised some sheets of Lord Hailes's "Annals of Scotland," and wrote a few notes on the margin with red ink, which he bade me tell his Lordship did not sink into the paper, and might be wiped off with a wet sponge, so that it did not spoil his manuscript. I observed to him that there were very few of his friends so accurate as that I could venture to put down in writing what they told me as his sayings. JOHNSON: "Why should you write down *my* sayings?" BOSWELL: "I write them when they are good?" JOHNSON: "Nay, you may as well write down the sayings of any one else that are good." But *where*, I might with great propriety have added, can I find such?

I visited him by appointment in the evening, and we drank tea with Mrs. Williams. He told me that he had been in the company of a gentleman<sup>2</sup> whose extraordinary travels had been much the subject of conversation. But I found he had not listened to him with that full confidence, without which there is little satisfaction in the society of travellers. I was curious to hear what opinion so able a judge as Johnson had formed of his abilities, and I asked if he was not a man of sense. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, he is not a distinct relater; and I should say, he is neither abounding nor deficient in sense. I did not perceive any superiority of understanding." BOSWELL: "But will you not allow him a nobleness of resolution, in penetrating into distant regions?" JOHNSON: "That, Sir, is not to the present purpose. We are talking of sense. A fighting cock has a nobleness of resolution."

Next day, Sunday, April 2, I dined with him at Mr. Hoole's. We talked of Pope. JOHNSON: "He wrote his 'Dunciad' for fame. That was his primary motive. Had it not been for that, the dunces might have railed against him till they were weary, without his troubling himself about them. He delighted to vex them, no doubt; but he had more delight in seeing how well he could vex them."

The "Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion," in ridicule of "cool Mason and warm Gray," being mentioned, Johnson said, "They are Colman's best things." Upon its being observed that it was believed these Odes

<sup>1</sup> The original is in the hands of Dr. Fothergill, then Vice Chancellor, who made this transcript.—T. WARTON

<sup>2</sup> James Bruce, the celebrated traveller, who had then recently returned from Abyssinia.--ED.

were made by Colman and Lloyd jointly—JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, how can two people make an Ode? Perhaps one made one of them, and one the other." I observed that two people had made a play, and quoted the anecdote of Beaumont and Fletcher, who were brought under suspicion of treason, because while concerting the plan of a tragedy when sitting together at a tavern, one of them was overheard saying to the other, "I'll kill the King." JOHNSON: "The first of these odes is the best; but they are both good. They exposed a very bad kind of writing." BOSWELL: "Surely, Sir, Mr. Mason's 'Elfrida' is a fine poem: at least you will allow there are some good passages in it." JOHNSON: "There are now and then some good imitations of Milton's bad manner."

I often wondered at his low estimation of the writings of Gray and Mason. Of Gray's poetry I have in a former part of this work expressed my high opinion; and for that of Mr. Mason I have ever entertained a warm admiration. His "Elfrida" is exquisite, both in poetical description and moral sentiment; and his "Caractacus" is a noble drama. Nor can I omit paying my tribute of praise to some of his smaller poems, which I have read with pleasure, and which no criticism shall persuade me not to like. If I wondered at Johnson's not tasting the works of Mason and Gray, still more have I wondered at their not tasting his works; that they should be insensible to his energy of diction, to his splendour of images, and comprehension of thought. Tastes may differ as to the violin, the flute, the hautboy, in short, all the lesser instruments; but who can be insensible to the powerful impressions of the majestic organ?

His "Taxation no Tyranny" being mentioned, he said, "I think I have not been attacked enough for it. Attack is the reaction; I never think I have hit hard, unless it rebounds." BOSWELL: "I don't know, Sir, what you would be at. Five or six shots of small arms in every newspaper, and repeated cannonading in pamphlets, might, I think, satisfy you. But, Sir, you'll never make out this match, of which we have talked, with a certain political lady, since you are so severe against her principles." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, I have the better chance for that. She is like the Amazons of old; she must be courted by the sword. But I have not been severe upon her." BOSWELL: "Yes, Sir, you have made her ridiculous." JOHNSON: "That was already done. Sir. To endeavour to make *her* ridiculous, is like blacking the chimney."

I put him in mind that the landlord at Ellon in Scotland said, that he heard he was the greatest man in England,—next to Lord Mansfield. "Ay, Sir," said he, "the exception defined the idea. A Scotchman could go no farther:

"The force of Nature could no farther go."

Lady Miller's collection of verses by fashionable people, which were put into her vase at Bath-Easton villa, near Bath, in competition

for honorary prizes, being mentioned, he held them very cheap: "*Boutsrimès*," said he, "is a mere conceit, and an *old* conceit *now*; I wonder how people were persuaded to write in that manner for this lady." I named a gentleman of his acquaintance who wrote for the vase. JOHNSON: "He was a blockhead for his pains." BOSWELL: "The Duchess of Northumberland wrote." JOHNSON: "Sir, the Duchess of Northumberland may do what she pleases: nobody will say anything to a lady of her high rank. But I should be apt to throw \*\*\*\*\*'s verses in his face."

I talked of the cheerfulness of Fleet-street, owing to the constant quick succession of people which we perceive passing through it. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, Fleet-street has a very animated appearance: but I think the tide of human existence is at Charing-cross."



FLEET STREET—1775.

He made the common remark on the unhappiness which men who have led a busy life experience, when they retire in expectation of enjoying themselves at ease, and that they generally languish for want of their habitual occupation, and wish to return to it. He mentioned as strong an instance of this as can well be imagined: "An eminent tallow-chandler in London, who had acquired a considerable fortune, gave up the trade in favour of his foreman, and went to live at a country-house near town. He soon grew weary, and paid frequent visits to his old shop, where he desired they might let him know their *melting-days*, and he would come and assist them; which he accordingly did. Here, Sir, was a man, to whom the most disgusting circumstances in the business to which he had been used was a relief from idleness."

On Wednesday, April 5, I dined with him at Messieurs Dilly's, with

Mr. John Scott of Amwell, the Quaker, Mr. Langton, Mr. Miller (now Sir John), and Dr. Thomas Campbell, an Irish clergyman, whom I took the liberty of inviting to Mr. Dilly's table, having seen him at Mr. Thrale's, and been told that he had come to England chiefly with a view to see Dr. Johnson, for whom he entertained the highest veneration. He has since published "A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland," a very entertaining book, which has, however, one fault:—that it assumes the fictitious character of an Englishman.

We talked of public speaking. JOHNSON: "We must not estimate a man's powers by his being able or not able to deliver his sentiments in public. Isaac Hawkins Browne, one of the first wits of this country, got into Parliament, and never opened his mouth. For my own part, I think it is more disgraceful never to try to speak, than to try it, and fail; as it is more disgraceful not to fight, than to fight and be beaten." This argument appeared to me fallacious; for if a man has not spoken, it may be said that he would have done very well if he had tried; whereas, if he has tried and failed, there is nothing to be said for him. "Why then," I asked, "is it thought disgraceful for a man not to fight, and not disgraceful not to speak in public?" JOHNSON: "Because there may be other reasons for a man's not speaking in public than want of resolution: he may have nothing to say (laughing). Whereas, Sir, you know courage is reckoned the greatest of all virtues; because, unless a man has that virtue, he has no security for preserving any other."

He observed, that "the statutes against bribery were intended to prevent upstarts with money from getting into Parliament:" adding, that "if he were a gentleman of landed property, he would turn out all his tenants who did not vote for the candidate whom he supported." LANGTON: "Would not that, Sir, be checking the freedom of election?" JOHNSON: "Sir, the law does not mean that the privilege of voting should be independent of old family interest, of the permanent property of the country."

On Thursday, April 6, I dined with him at Mr. Thomas Davies's, with Mr. Hickey, the painter, and my old acquaintance Mr. Moody, the player.

Dr. Johnson, as usual, spoke contemptuously of Colley Cibber. "It is wonderful that a man, who for forty years had lived with the great and the witty, should have acquired so ill the talents of conversation; and he had but half to furnish; for one half of what he said was oaths." He, however, allowed considerable merit to some of his comedies, and said there was no reason to believe that "The Careless Husband" was not written by himself. Davies said, he was the first dramatic writer who introduced genteel ladies upon the stage. Johnson refuted his observation by instancing several such characters in comedies before his time. DAVIES (trying to defend himself from a charge of ignorance): "I mean genteel moral characters." "I think," said Hickey, "gentility

and morality are inseparable." BOSWELL: "By no means, Sir. The genteel characters are often the most immoral. Does not Lord Chesterfield give precepts for uniting wickedness and the graces? A man, indeed, is not genteel when he gets drunk; but most vices may be committed very genteelly: a man may debauch his friend's wife genteelly: he may cheat at cards genteelly." HICKEY: "I do not think *that* is genteel." BOSWELL: "Sir, it may not be like a gentleman, but it may be genteel." JOHNSON: "You are meaning two different things. One means exterior grace; the other honour. It is certain that a man may be very immoral with exterior grace. Lovelace, in 'Clarissa,' is a very genteel and a very wicked character. Tom Hervey, who died t'other day, though a vicious man, was one of the genteel men that ever lived." Tom Davies instanced Charles the Second. JOHNSON (taking fire at any attack upon that Prince, for whom he had an extraordinary partiality): "Charles the Second was licentious in his practice; but he always had a reverence for what was good. Charles the Second knew his people, and rewarded merit. The Church was at no time better filled than in his reign. He was the best King we have had from his time till the reign of his present Majesty, except James the Second, who was a very good King, but unhappily believed that it was necessary for the salvation of his subjects that they should be Roman Catholics. *He* had the merit of endeavouring to do what he thought was for the salvation of the souls of his subjects, till he lost a great empire. *We*, who thought that we should *not* be saved if we were Roman Catholics, had the merit of maintaining our religion, at the expense of submitting ourselves to the government of King William (for it could not be done otherwise),—to the government of one of the most worthless scoundrels that ever existed. No; Charles the Second was not such a man as ——— (naming another King). He did not destroy his father's will. He took money, indeed, from France: but he did not betray those over whom he ruled: he did not let the French fleet pass ours. George the First knew nothing, and desired to know nothing: did nothing, and desired to do nothing; and the only good thing that is told of him is, that he wished to restore the crown to its hereditary successor." He roared with prodigious violence against George the Second. When he ceased, Moody interjected, in an Irish tone, and with a comic look, "Ah! poor George the Second."

I mentioned that Dr. Thomas Campbell had come from Ireland to London, principally to see Dr. Johnson. He seemed angry at this observation. DAVIES: "Why, you know, Sir, there came a man from Spain to see Livy,<sup>1</sup> and Corelli came to England to see Purcell,<sup>2</sup> and, when he heard he was dead, went directly back again to Italy."

<sup>1</sup> Plin. Epist. Lib. ii. Ep. 3.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Davies was here mistaken. Corelli never was in England.—BURNET.

JOHNSON: "I should not have wished to be dead to disappoint Campbell, had he been so foolish as you represent him; but I should have wished to have been a hundred miles off." This was apparently perverse; and I do believe it was not his real way of thinking: he could not but like a man who came so far to see him. He laughed with some complacency, when I told him Campbell's odd expression to me concerning him: "That having seen such a man, was a thing to talk of a century hence,"—as if he could live so long.

We got into an argument whether the Judges who went to India might with propriety engage in trade. Johnson warmly maintained that they might, "For why," he urged, "should not Judges get riches, as well as those who deserve them less?" I said, they should have sufficient salaries, and have nothing to take off their attention from the affairs of the public. JOHNSON: "No Judge, Sir, can give his whole attention to his office; and it is very proper that he should employ what time he has to himself, to his own advantage, in the most profitable manner." "Then, Sir," said Davies, who enlivened the dispute by making it somewhat dramatic, "he may become an insurer; and when he is going to the bench he may be stopped,—'Your Lordship cannot go yet; here is a bunch of invoices: several ships are about to sail.'" JOHNSON: "Sir, you may as well say a Judge should not have a house; for they may come and tell him, 'Your Lordship's house is on fire;' and so, instead of minding the business of his Court, he is to be occupied in getting the engine with the greatest speed. There is no end of this. Every Judge who has land, trades to a certain extent in corn or in cattle; and in the land itself: undoubtedly his steward acts for him, and so do clerks for a great merchant. A Judge may be a farmer; but he is not to geld his own pigs. A Judge may play a little at cards for his amusement; but he is not to play at marbles, or chuck farthings in the Piazza. No, Sir, there is no profession to which a man gives a very great proportion of his time. It is wonderful when a calculation is made, how little the mind is actually employed in the discharge of any profession. No man would be a Judge, upon the condition of being totally a Judge. The best employed lawyer has his mind at work but for a small proportion of his time: a great deal of his occupation is merely mechanical.—I once wrote for a magazine: I made a calculation that if I should write but a page a day, at the same rate, I should, in ten years, write nine volumes in folio, of an ordinary size and print." BOSWELL: "Such as Carte's History?" JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir, when a man writes from his own mind, he writes very rapidly.<sup>1</sup> The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write; a man will turn over half a library to make one book."

<sup>1</sup> Johnson certainly did, who had a mind stored with knowledge, and teeming with imagery: but the observation is not applicable to writers in general.—BOSWELL.

I argued warmly against the Judges trading, and mentioned Hale as an instance of a perfect Judge, who devoted himself entirely to his office. JOHNSON: "Hale, Sir, attended to other things besides law: he left a great estate." BOSWELL: "That was because what he got accumulated without any exertion and anxiety on his part."

While the dispute went on, Moody once tried to say something on our side. Tom Davies clapped him on the back, to encourage him. Beauclerk, to whom I mentioned this circumstance, said, "that he could not conceive a more humiliating situation than to be clapped on the back by Tom Davies."

We spoke of Rolt, to whose Dictionary of Commerce Dr. Johnson wrote the Preface. JOHNSON: "Old Gardner, the bookseller, employed Rolt and Smart to write a monthly miscellany, called 'The Universal Visitor.' There was a formal written contract, which Allen the printer saw. Gardner thought as you do of the judge. They were bound to write nothing else; they were to have, I think, a third of the profits of his sixpenny pamphlet; and the contract was for ninety-nine years. I wish I had thought of giving this to Thurlow, in the cause about literary property. What an excellent instance would it have been of the oppression of booksellers towards poor authors!"<sup>1</sup> (smiling). Davies, zealous for the honour of the trade, said, Gardner was not properly a bookseller. JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir; he certainly was a bookseller. He had served his time regularly, was a member of the Stationers' Company, kept a shop in the face of mankind, purchased copyright, and was a *bibliopole*, Sir, in every sense. I wrote for some months in 'The Universal Visitor,' for poor Smart, while he was mad, not then knowing the terms on which he was engaged to write, and thinking I was doing him good. I hoped his wits would soon return to him. Mine returned to me, and I wrote in 'The Universal Visitor' no longer."

Friday, April 7, I dined with him at a tavern, with a numerous company. JOHNSON: "I have been reading 'Twiss's Travels in Spain,' which are just come out. They are as good as the first book of travels that you will take up. They are as good as those of Keysler or Blainville: nay, as Addison's,<sup>2</sup> if you except the learning. They are not so good as Brydone's, but they are better than Poccocke's. I have not, indeed, cut the leaves yet; but I have read in them where the pages are

There has probably been some mistake as to the terms of this supposed extraordinary contract, the recital of which from hearsay afforded Johnson so much play for his sportive acuteness. Or if it was worded as he supposed, it is so strange that I should conclude it was a joke. Mr. Gardner, I am assured, was a worthy and liberal man.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of Addison's *Remarks on Italy*, in "The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," (p. 320, 3rd edit.) he says, "It is a tedious book, and if it were not attached to Addison's previous reputation, one would not think much of it. Had he written nothing else, his name would not have lived. Addison does not seem to have gone deep into Italian literature. He shows nothing of it in his subsequent writings. He shows a great deal of French learning."—MALONE.



open, and I do not suppose that what is in the pages which are closed is worse than what is in the open pages.—It would seem," he added, "that Addison had not acquired much Italian learning, for we do not find it introduced into his writings. The only instance that I recollect, is his quoting '*Stavo bene ; per star meglio, sto qui.*'"<sup>1</sup>

I mentioned Addison's having borrowed many of his classical remarks from Leandro Alberti. Mr. Beauclerk said, "It was alleged that he had borrowed also from another Italian author." JOHNSON : "Why, Sir, all who go to look for what the classics have said of Italy, must find the same passages :<sup>2</sup> and I should think it would be one of the first things the Italians would do on the revival of learning, to collect all that the Roman authors have said of their country."

Ossian being mentioned—JOHNSON : "Supposing the Irish and Erse languages to be the same, which I do not believe, yet as there is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of the Highlands and Hebrides ever wrote their native language, it is not to be credited that a long poem was preserved among them. If we had no evidence of the art of writing being practised in one of the counties of England, we should not believe that a long poem was preserved *there*, though in the neighbouring counties, where the same language was spoken, the inhabitants could write." BEAUCLERK : "The ballad of Lilliburlero was once in the mouths of all the people of this country, and is said to have had a great effect in bringing about the Revolution. Yet I question whether any body can repeat it now ; which shows how improbable it is that much poetry should be preserved by tradition."

One of the company suggested an internal objection to the antiquity of the poetry said to be Ossian's, that we do not find the wolf in it, which must have been the case had it been of that age.

The mention of the wolf had led Johnson to think of other wild beasts ; and while Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Langton were carrying on a dialogue about something which engaged them earnestly, he, in the midst of it, broke out, "Pennant tells of Bears." What he added, I have forgotten. They went on, which he, being dull of hearing, did not



EDWARD GIBBON.

<sup>1</sup> Addison, however, does not mention where this celebrated Epitaph, which has eluded a very diligent inquiry, is found.—MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> But if you find the same *applications* in another book, then Addison's learning falls to the ground. "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," *ut supra*.—MALONE.

perceive, or, if he did, was not willing to break off his talk; so he continued to vociferate his remarks, and *Bear* ("like a word in a catch" as Beauclerk said,) was repeatedly heard at intervals, which coming from him who, by those who did not know him, had been so often assimilated to that ferocious animal, while we who were sitting around could hardly stifle laughter, produced a very ludicrous effect. Silence having ensued, he proceeded: "We are told, that the black bear is innocent; but I should not like to trust myself with him." Mr. Gibbon muttered, in a low tone of voice, "I should not like to trust myself with *you*." This piece of sarcastic pleasantry was a prudent resolution, if applied to competition of abilities.

Patriotism having become one of our topics, Johnson suddenly uttered, in a strong determined tone, an apophthegm, at which many will start: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." But let it be considered, that he did not mean a real and generous love of our country, but that pretended patriotism which so many, in all ages and countries, have made a cloak for self-interest. I maintained, that certainly all patriots were not scoundrels. Being urged (not by Johnson), to name one exception, I mentioned an eminent person, whom we all greatly admired. JOHNSON: "Sir, I do not say that he is *not* honest; but we have no reason to conclude from his political conduct that he *is* honest. Were he to accept a place from this ministry, he would lose that character of firmness which he has, and might be turned out of his place in a year. This ministry is neither stable, nor grateful to their friends, as Sir Robert Walpole was: so that he may think it more for his interest to take his chance of his party coming in."

Mrs Pritchard being mentioned, he said, "Her playing was quite mechanical. It is wonderful how little mind she had. Sir, she had never read the tragedy of *Macbeth* all through. She no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken, than a shoemaker thinks of the skin, out of which the piece of leather, of which he is making a pair of shoes, is cut."

On Saturday, May 8, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, where we met the Irish Dr. Campbell. Johnson had supped the night before at Mrs. Abington's with some fashionable people whom he named; and he seemed much pleased with having made one in so elegant a circle. Nor did he omit to pique his *mistress* a little with jealousy of her housewifery; for he said, with a smile, "Mrs. Abington's jelly, my dear lady, was better than yours."

Mrs. Thrale, who frequently practised a coarse mode of flattery, by repeating his *bon-mots* in his hearing, told us that he had said, a certain celebrated actor was just fit to stand at the door of an auction-room with a long pole, and cry, "Pray, gentlemen, walk in;" and that a certain author, upon hearing this, had said, that another still more celebrated actor was fit for nothing better than that, and would pick

your pocket after you came out. JOHNSON: "Nay, my dear lady, there is no wit in what our friend added; there is only abuse. You may as well say of any man that he will pick a pocket. Besides, the man who is stationed at the door does not pick people's pockets; that is done within, by the auctioneer."

Mrs. Thrale told us, that Tom Davies repeated, in a very bold manner, the story of Dr. Johnson's first repartee to me, which I have related exactly. He made me say, "I *was born* in Scotland," instead of "I *come from* Scotland;" so that Johnson's saying, "That, Sir, is what a great many of your countrymen cannot help" had no point, or even meaning: and that upon this being mentioned to Mr. Fitzherbert, he observed, "it is not every man that can *carry a bon-mot*."

On Monday, April 10, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, with Mr. Langton and the Irish Dr. Campbell, whom the General had obligingly given me leave to bring with me. This learned gentleman was thus gratified with a very high intellectual feast, by not only being in company with Dr. Johnson, but with General Oglethorpe, who had been so long a celebrated name both at home and abroad.<sup>1</sup>

I must, again and again, entreat of my readers not to suppose that my imperfect record of conversation contains the whole of what was said by Johnson, or other eminent persons who lived with him. What I have preserved, however, has the value of the most perfect authenticity

He this day enlarged upon Pope's melancholy remark,

"Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest."

He asserted, that *the present* was never a happy state to any human being; but that, as every part of life, of which we are conscious, was at some point of time a period yet to come, in which felicity was expected, there was some happiness produced by hope. Being pressed upon this subject, and asked if he really was of opinion, that though, in general, happiness was very rare in human life, a man was not sometimes happy in the moment that was present, he answered, "Never, but when he is drunk."

<sup>1</sup> Let me here be allowed to pay my tribute of most sincere gratitude to the memory of that excellent person, my intimacy with whom was the more valuable to me, because my first acquaintance with him was unexpected and unsolicited. Soon after the publication of my "Account of Corsica," he did me the honour to call on me, and approaching me with a frank and courteous air, said, "My name, Sir, is Oglethorpe, and I wish to be acquainted with you." I was not a little flattered to be thus addressed by an eminent man, of whom I had read in Pope, from my early years,

"Or driven by strong benevolence of soul,  
Will fly, like Oglethorpe, from pole to pole."

I was fortunate enough to be found worthy of his good opinion, insomuch, that I not only was invited to make one in the many respectable companies whom he entertained at his table, but had a cover at his hospitable board every day when I happened to be disengaged; and in his society I never failed to enjoy learned and animated conversation seasoned with genuine sentiments of virtue and religion.—BOSWELL.

He urged General Oglethorpe to give the world his life.<sup>1</sup> He said, "I know no man whose life would be more interesting. If I were furnished with materials, I should be very glad to write it."

Mr. Scott of Amwell's Elegies were lying in the room. Dr. Johnson observed, "They are very well; but such as twenty people might write." Upon this I took occasion to controvert Horace's maxim

"—————mediocribus esse poetis  
Non homines, non Di, non concessere columnæ;"<sup>2</sup>

for here (I observed), was a very middle-rate poet, who pleased many readers, and therefore poetry of a middle sort was entitled to some esteem; nor could I see why poetry should not, like everything else, have different gradations of excellence, and consequently of value. Johnson repeated the common remark, that, "as there is no necessity for our having poetry at all, it being merely a luxury, an instrument of pleasure, it can have no value, unless when exquisite in its kind." I declared myself not satisfied. "Why, then, Sir," said he, "Horace and you must settle it." He was not much in the humour of talking.

No more of his conversation for some days appears in my journal, except that when a gentleman told him he had bought a suit of lace for his lady, he said, "Well, Sir, you have done a good thing and a wise thing." "I have done a good thing," said the gentleman, "but I do not know that I have done a wise thing." JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir; no money is better spent than what is laid out for domestic satisfaction. A man is pleased that his wife is dressed as well as other people; and a wife is pleased that she is dressed."

<sup>1</sup> The General seemed unwilling to enter upon it at this time; but upon a subsequent occasion he communicated to me a number of particulars, which I have committed to writing; but I was not sufficiently diligent in obtaining more from him, not apprehending that his friends were so soon to lose him; for notwithstanding his great age, he was very healthy and vigorous, and was at last carried off by a violent fever, which is often fatal at any period of life.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> De Art. Poet. v. 372.—BOSWELL.



JOHNSON AT MR. CAMBRIDGE'S.

## CHAPTER XI.—1775.

GOOD FRIDAY—LORD BUTE—VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE—FAME AND IMMORTALITY—ADVANTAGES OF READING—DINNER AT MR. CAMBRIDGE'S—JOHNSON'S OBJECTIONS TO FEMALE PORTRAIT-PAINTERS—ISAAC WALTON'S "LIVES"—GAY'S "BEGGARS' OPERA"—RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN'S MARRIAGE—"THE SPECTATOR"—JOHNSON AND BOSWELL VISIT BEDLAM—AN APARTMENT ASSIGNED TO BOSWELL IN JOHNSON'S HOUSE—SUNDAY CONSULTATIONS—ALCHYMY—JOHNSON'S "RHINOCEROS LAUGH"—CORRESPONDENCE WITH BOSWELL IN SCOTLAND.

ON Friday, April 14, being Good-Friday, I repaired to him in the morning, according to my usual custom on that day, and breakfasted with him. I observed that he fasted so very strictly, that he did not even taste bread, and took no milk with his tea; I suppose because it is a kind of animal food.

He entered upon the state of the nation, and thus discoursed: "Sir, the great misfortune now is, that government has too little power. All that it has to bestow must of necessity be given to support itself; so that it cannot reward merit. No man, for instance, can now be made a bishop for his learning and piety;<sup>1</sup> his only chance for promotion is his

<sup>1</sup> From this too just observation there are some eminent exceptions.—BOSWELL.

being connected with somebody who has parliamentary interest. Our several ministers in this reign have outbid each other in concessions to the people. Lord Bute, though a very honourable man,—a man who meant well,—a man who had his blood full of prerogative,—was a theoretical statesman,—a book-minister,—and thought this country could be governed by the influence of the Crown alone. Then, Sir, he gave up a great deal. He advised the king to agree that the judges should hold their places for life, instead of losing them at the accession of a new king. Lord Bute, I suppose, thought to make the king popular by this concession; but the people never minded it; and it was a most impolitic measure. There is no reason why a judge should hold his office for life, more than any other person in public trust. A judge may be partial otherwise than to the Crown: we have seen judges partial to the populace. A judge may become corrupt, and yet there may not be legal evidence against him. A judge may become froward from age. A judge may grow unfit for his office in many ways. It was desirable that there should be a possibility of being delivered from him by a new king. That is now gone by an act of Parliament *ex gratiâ* of the Crown. Lord Bute advised the king to give up a very large sum of money,<sup>1</sup> for which nobody thanked him. It was of consequence to the king, but nothing to the public, among whom it was divided. When I say Lord Bute advised, I mean, that such acts were done when he was minister, and we are to suppose that he advised them.—Lord Bute showed an undue partiality to Scotchmen. He turned out Dr. Nichols, a very eminent man, from being physician to the king, to make room for one of his countrymen, a man very low in his profession. He had \* \* \* \* and \* \* \* to go on errands for him. He had occasion for people to go on errands for him; but he should not have had Scotchmen; and, certainly, he should not have suffered them to have access to him before the first people in England.”

I told him, that the admission of one of them before the first people in England, which had given the greatest offence, was no more than what happens at every minister's levee, where those who attend are admitted in the order that they have come, which is better than admitting them according to their rank; for if that were to be the rule, a man who has waited all the morning might have the mortification to see a peer, newly

<sup>1</sup> The money arising from the property of the prizes taken before the declaration of war, which were given to his Majesty by the Peace of Paris, and amounted to upwards of 700,000*l.*, and from the lands in the ceded islands, which were estimated at 200,000*l.* more. Surely there was a noble munificence in this gift from a monarch to his people. And let it be remembered, that during the Earl of Bute's administration, the king was graciously pleased to give up the hereditary revenues of the Crown, and to accept, instead of them, of the limited sum of 800,000*l.* a year: upon which Blackstone observes, that “The hereditary revenues, being put under the same management as the other branches of the public patrimony, will produce more and be better collected than heretofore; and the public is a gainer of upwards of 100,000*l.* per annum by this disinterested bounty of his Majesty.”—Book i. chap. viii. p. 330.

come, go in before him, and keep him waiting still. JOHNSON: "True, Sir; but \* \* \* \* should not have come to the levee, to be in the way of people of consequence. He saw Lord Bute at all times: and could have said what he had to say at any time, as well as at the levee. There is now no Prime Minister; there is only an agent for government in the House of Commons. We are governed by the Cabinet; but there is no one head there since Sir Robert Walpole's time." BOSWELL: "What then, Sir, is the use of Parliament?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, Parliament is a large council to the king; and the advantage of such a council is, having a great number of men of property concerned in the legislature, who, for their own interest, will not consent to bad laws. And you must have observed, Sir, the administration is feeble and timid, and cannot act with that authority and resolution which is necessary. Were I in power, I would turn out every man who dared to oppose me. Government has the distribution of offices, that it may be enabled to maintain its authority."

"Lord Bute," he added, "took down too fast, without building up something new." BOSWELL: "Because, Sir, he found a rotten building. The political coach was drawn by a set of bad horses; it was necessary to change them." JOHNSON: "But he should have changed them one by one."

I told him that I had been informed by Mr. Orme, that many parts of the East Indies were better mapped than the Highlands of Scotland. JOHNSON: "That a country may be mapped, it must be travelled over." "Nay," said I, meaning to laugh with him at one of his prejudices, "can't you say, it is not *worth* mapping?"

As we walked to St. Clement's Church, and saw several shops open upon this most solemn fast-day of the Christian world, I remarked, that one disadvantage arising from the immensity of London was, that nobody was heeded by his neighbour; there was no fear of censure for not observing Good Friday, as it ought to be kept, and as it is kept in country towns. He said it was, upon the whole, very well observed even in London. He, however, owned that London was too large; but added, "It is nonsense to say the head is too big for the body. It would be as much too big though the body were ever so large; that is to say, though the country were ever so extensive. It has no similarity to a head connected with a body."

Dr. Wetherell, Master of University College, Oxford, accompanied us home from church; and after he was gone, there came two other gentlemen, one of whom uttered the common-place complaints, that by the increase of taxes, labour would be dear, other nations would undersell us, and our commerce would be ruined. JOHNSON (smiling): "Never fear, Sir. Our commerce is in a very good state; and suppose we had no commerce at all, we could live very well on the produce of our own country." I cannot omit to mention, that I never knew any man who

was less disposed to be querulous than Johnson. Whether the subject was his own situation, or the state of the public, or the state of human nature in general, though he saw the evils, his mind was turned to resolution, and never to whining or complaint.

We went again to St. Clement's in the afternoon. He had found fault with the preacher in the morning for not choosing a text adapted to the day. The preacher in the afternoon had chosen one extremely proper: "It is finished."

After the evening service, he said, "Come, you shall go home with me, and sit just an hour." But he was better than his word; for, after we had drunk tea with Mrs. Williams, he asked me to go up to his study with him, where we sat a long while together in a serene, undisturbed frame of mind, sometimes in silence, and sometimes conversing, as we felt ourselves inclined, or more properly speaking, as *he* was inclined; for during all the course of my long intimacy with him, my respectful attention never abated, and my wish to hear him was such, that I constantly watched every dawning of communication from that great and illuminated mind.

He observed, "All knowledge is of itself of some value. There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable, that I would not rather know it than not. In the same manner, all power, of whatever sort, is of itself desirable. A man would not submit to learn to hem a ruffle of his wife, or of his wife's maid; but if a mere wish could attain it, he would rather wish to be able to hem a ruffle."

He again advised me to keep a journal fully and minutely, but not to mention such trifles as that meat was too much or too little done, or that the weather was fair or rainy. He had till very near his death a contempt for the notion that the weather affects the human frame.

I told him that our friend Goldsmith had said to me that he had come too late into the world, for that Pope and other poets had taken up the places in the Temple of Fame; so that, as but a few at any period can possess poetical reputation, a man of genius can now hardly acquire it. JOHNSON: "That is one of the most sensible things I have ever heard of Goldsmith. It is difficult to get literary fame, and it is every day growing more difficult. Ah, Sir, that should make a man think of securing happiness in another world, which all who try sincerely for it may attain. In comparison of that, how little are all other things! The belief of immortality is impressed upon all men, and all men act under an impression of it, however they may talk, and though, perhaps, they may be scarcely sensible of it." I said, it appeared to me that some people had not the least notion of immortality; and I mentioned a distinguished gentleman of our acquaintance. JOHNSON: "Sir, if it were not for the notion of immortality, he would cut a throat to fill his pockets." When I quoted this to Beauclerk, who knew much more of the gentleman than



we did, he said, in his acid manner, "He would cut a throat to fill his pockets, if it were not for fear of being hanged."

Dr. Johnson proceeded: "Sir, there is a great cry about infidelity; but there are, in reality, very few infidels. I have heard a person, originally a Quaker, but now, I am afraid, a Deist, say that he did not believe there were, in all England, above two hundred infidels."

He was pleased to say, "If you come to settle here, we will have one day in the week on which we will meet by ourselves. That is the happiest conversation where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm, quiet interchange of sentiment." In his private register this evening is thus marked:—

"Boswell sat with me till night; we had some serious talk."<sup>1</sup>

It also appears from the same record, that after I left him he was occupied in religious duties, in

"giving Francis, his servant, some directions for preparation to communicate; in reviewing his life, and resolving on better conduct."

The humility and piety which he discovers on such occasions, is truly edifying. No saint, however, in the course of his religious warfare, was more sensible of the unhappy failure of pious resolves, than Johnson. He said one day, talking to an acquaintance on this subject, "Sir, Hell is paved with good intentions."<sup>2</sup>

On Sunday, April 16, being Easter-day, after having attended the solemn service at St. Paul's, I dined with Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Williams. I maintained that Horace was wrong in placing happiness in *Nil admirari*, for that I thought admiration one of the most agreeable of all our feelings; and I regretted that I had lost much of my disposition to admire, which people generally do as they advance in life. JOHNSON: "Sir, as a man advances in life, he gets what is better than admiration,—judgment, to estimate things at their true value." I still insisted that admiration was more pleasing than judgment, as love is more pleasing than friendship. The feeling of friendship is like that of being comfortably filled with roast beef; love, like being enlivened with champagne. JOHNSON: "No, Sir: admiration and love are like being intoxicated with champagne; judgment and friendship like being enlivened. Waller has hit upon the same thought with you;<sup>3</sup> but I don't

<sup>1</sup> Prayers and Meditations, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> This is a proverbial sentence. "Hell," says Herbert, "is full of good meanings and wishings."—*JACULA PRUDENTUM*, p. 11, edit. 1651.—MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> "Amoret's as sweet and good  
As the most delicious food;  
Which but tasted does impart  
Life and gladness to the heart.

"Sacharissa's beauty's wine,  
Which to madness does incline  
Such a liquor as no brain  
That is mortal can sustain."—BOSWELL.

believe you have borrowed from Waller. I wish you would enable yourself to borrow more."

He then took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle, superficial notion, that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. "The foundation," said he, "must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other that he never attains to a full view."

"TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

April 17, 1775.

"I have enquired more minutely about the medicine for the rheumatism, which I am sorry to hear that you still want. The receipt is this:—

"Take equal quantities of flour of sulphur, and *flour* of mustard seed; make them an electuary with honey or treacle, and take a bolus as big as a nutmeg several times a day, as you can bear it, drinking after it a quarter of a pint of the infusion of the root of Lovage.

"Lovage, in Ray's 'Nomenclature,' is *Levisticum*: perhaps the botanists may know the Latin name.

"Of this medicine I pretend not to judge. There is all the appearance of its efficacy, which a single instance can afford. The patient was very old, the pain very violent, and the relief, I think, speedy and lasting.

"My opinion of alterative medicine is not high, but *quid tentasse nocebit!* If it does harm, or does no good, it may be omitted; but that it may do good, you have, I hope, reason to think is desired by, Sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

On Tuesday, April 11, he and I were engaged to go with Sir Joshua Reynolds to dine with Mr. Cambridge, at his beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, near Twickenham. Dr. Johnson's tardiness was such, that Sir Joshua, who had an appointment at Richmond, early in the day, was obliged to go by himself on horseback, leaving his coach to Johnson and me. Johnson was in such good spirits, that everything seemed to please him as we drove along.

Our conversation turned on a variety of subjects. He thought portrait-painting an improper employment for a woman. "Public practice of any art," he observed, "and staring in men's faces, is very indelicate in a female." I happened to start a question, whether, when a man knows that some of his intimate friends are invited to the house of another friend with whom they are all equally intimate, he may join them without an invitation. JOHNSON: "No, Sir; he is not to go when he is not invited. They may be invited on purpose to abuse him." (smiling).

As a curious instance how little a man knows, or wishes to know his

own character in the world, or, rather as a convincing proof that Johnson's roughness was only external, and did not proceed from his heart, I insert the following dialogue. JOHNSON: "It is wonderful, Sir, how rare a quality good-humour is in life. We meet with very few good-humoured men." I mentioned four of our friends, none of whom he would allow to be good-humoured. One was *acid*, another was *muddy*, and to the others he had objections which have escaped me. Then, shaking his head and stretching himself at ease in the coach, and smiling with much complacency, he turned to me and said, "I look upon *myself* as a good-humoured fellow." The epithet *fellow*, applied to the great Lexicographer, the stately Moralist, the masterly Critic, as if he had been *Sam* Johnson, a mere pleasant companion, was highly diverting; and this light notion of himself struck me with wonder. I answered, also smiling, "No, no, Sir; that will *not* do. You are good-natured, but not good-humoured: you are irascible. You have not patience with folly and absurdity. I believe you would pardon them, if there were time to deprecate your vengeance; but punishment follows so quick after sentence, that they cannot escape."

I had brought with me a great bundle of Scotch magazines and newspapers, in which his "Journey to the Western Islands" was attacked in every mode; and I read a great part of them to him, knowing they would afford him entertainment. I wish the writers of them had been present: they would have been sufficiently vexed. One ludicrous imitation of his style, by Mr. Maclaurin, now one of the Scotch Judges, with the title of Lord Dreghorn, was distinguished by him from the rude mass. "This," said he, "is the best. But I could caricature my own style much better myself." He defended his remark upon the general insufficiency of education in Scotland; and confirmed to me the authenticity of his witty saying on the learning of the Scotch:—"Their learning is like bread in a besieged town: every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal." "There is," said he, "in Scotland, a diffusion of learning, a certain portion of it widely and thinly spread. A merchant has as much learning as one of their clergy."

He talked of Isaac Walton's *Lives*, which was one of his most favourite books. Dr. Donne's *Life*, he said, was the most perfect of them. He observed, that "it was wonderful that Walton, who was in a very low situation in life, should have been familiarly received by so many great men, and that at a time when the ranks of society were kept more separate than they are now." He supposed that Walton had then given up his business as a linen-draper and sempster, and was only an author;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Johnson's conjecture was erroneous. Walton did not retire from business till 1643. But in 1664, Dr. King, Bishop of Chichester, in a letter prefixed to his "*Lives*," mentions his having been familiarly acquainted with him for forty years; and in 1631 he was so intimate with Dr. Donne, that he was one of the friends who attended him on his death-bed.—J. BOSWELL, JUN.

and added, "that he was a great panegyrist." BOSWELL: "No quality will get a man more friends than a disposition to admire the qualities of others. I do not mean flattery, but a sincere admiration." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, flattery pleases very generally. In the first place, the flatterer may think what he says to be true; but in the second place, whether he thinks so or not, he certainly thinks those whom he flatters of consequence enough to be flattered."

No sooner had we made our bow to Mr. Cambridge, in his library, than Johnson ran eagerly to one side of the room intent on poring over the backs of the books.<sup>1</sup> Sir Joshua observed (aside), "He runs to the books as I do to the pictures; but I have the advantage. I can see much more of the pictures than he can of the books." Mr. Cambridge, upon this, politely said, "Dr. Johnson, I am going, with your pardon, to accuse myself, for I have the same custom which I perceive you have. But it seems odd that one should have such a desire to look at the backs of books." Johnson, ever ready for contest, instantly started from his reverie, wheeled about and answered, "Sir, the reason is very plain. Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and the backs of books in libraries." Sir Joshua observed to me the extraordinary promptitude with which Johnson flew upon an argument. "Yes," said I, "he has no formal preparation, no flourishing with his sword; he is through your body in an instant."

Johnson was here solaced with an elegant entertainment, a very accomplished family, and much good company; among whom was Mr. Harris, of Salisbury, who paid him many compliments on his "Journey to the Western Islands."

The common remark as to the utility of reading history being made; —JOHNSON: "We must consider how very little history there is; I mean real authentic history. That certain kings reigned, and certain battles were fought, we can depend upon as true; but all the colouring, all the philosophy of history, is conjecture." BOSWELL: "Then, Sir, you would reduce all history to no better than an almanac, a mere chronological series of remarkable events." Mr. Gibbon, who must at that time have been employed upon his history, of which he published the first volume in the following year, was present; but did not step forth in defence of that species of writing. He probably did not like to *trust* himself with Johnson.

<sup>1</sup> The first time he dined with me, he was shown into my book-room, and instantly pored over the lettering of each volume within his reach. My collection of books is very miscellaneous, and I feared there might be some among them that he would not like. But seeing the number of volumes very considerable, he said, "You are an honest man to have formed so great an accumulation of knowledge."—BURNBY.

Johnson observed, that the force of our early habits was so great that though reason approved, nay, though our senses relished a different course, almost every man returned to them. I do not believe there is any observation upon human nature better founded than this; and, in many cases, it is a very painful truth; for where early habits have been mean and wretched, the joy and elevation resulting from better modes of life must be damped by the gloomy consciousness of being under an almost inevitable doom to sink back into a situation which we recollect with disgust. It surely may be prevented, by constant attention and unremitting exertion to establish contrary habits of superior efficacy.

“The Beggars’ Opera,” and the common question, whether it was pernicious in its effects, having been introduced;—JOHNSON: “As to this matter, which has been very much contested, I myself am of opinion, that more influence has been ascribed to ‘The Beggars’ Opera,’ than it in reality ever had; for I do not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by being present at its representation. At the same time I do not deny that it may have some influence, by making the character of a rogue familiar, and in some degree pleasing.”<sup>1</sup> Then collecting himself, as it were, to give a heavy stroke: “There is in it such a *labefactation* of all principles as may be injurious to morality.”

While he pronounced this response, we sat in a comical sort of restraint, smothering a laugh, which we were afraid might burst out. In his life of Gay, he has been still more decisive as to the inefficiency of “The Beggars’ Opera” in corrupting society. But I have ever thought somewhat differently; for, indeed, not only are the gaiety and heroism of a highwayman very captivating to a youthful imagination, but the arguments for adventurous depredation are so plausible, the allusions so lively, and the contrasts with the ordinary and more painful modes of acquiring property are so artfully displayed, that it requires a cool and strong judgment to resist so imposing an aggregate: yet, I own, I should be very sorry to have “The Beggars’ Opera” suppressed; for there is in it so much of real London life, so much brilliant wit, and such a variety of airs, which, from early association of ideas, engage, soothe, and enliven the mind, that no performance which the theatre exhibits delights me more.

The late “*worthy*” Duke of Queensbury, as Thomson, in his “Seasons,” justly characterises him, told me, that when Gay showed

<sup>1</sup> A very eminent physician, whose discernment is as acute and penetrating in judging of the human character as it is in his own profession, remarked once at a club where I was, that a lively young man, fond of pleasure, and without money, would hardly resist a solicitation from his mistress to go upon the highway, immediately after being present at the representation of “The Beggars’ Opera.” I have been told of an ingenious observation by Mr. Gibbon that “The Beggars’ Opera” may perhaps have sometimes increased the number of highwaymen; but that it has had a beneficial effect in refining that class of men, making them less ferocious, more polite,—in short, more like gentlemen.” Upon this, Mr. Courtenay said, that “Gay was the Orpheus of highwaymen.”—BOSWELL.

him "The Beggars' Opera," his Grace's observation was, "This is a very odd thing, Gay; I am satisfied that it is either a very good thing, or a very bad thing." It proved the former, beyond the warmest expectations of the author or his friends. Mr. Cambridge, however, showed us to-day, that there was good reason enough to doubt concerning its success. He was told by Quin, that during the first night of its appearance it was long in a very dubious state; that there was a disposition to damn it, and that it was saved by the song,

"Oh ponder well! be not severe!"

the audience being much affected by the innocent looks of Polly, when she came to those two lines, which exhibit at once a painful and ridiculous image,

"For on the rope that hangs my dear,  
Depends poor Polly's life."

Quin himself had so bad an opinion of it, that he refused the part of Captain Macheath, and gave it to Walker, who acquired great celebrity by his grave yet animated performance of it.

We talked of a young gentleman's marriage with an eminent singer, and his determination that she should no longer sing in public, though his father was very earnest she should, because her talents would be liberally rewarded, so as to make her a good fortune. It was questioned whether the young gentleman, who had not a shilling in the world, but was blest with very uncommon talents, was not foolishly delicate, or foolishly proud, and his father truly rational, without being mean. JOHNSON, with all the high spirit of a Roman senator, exclaimed, "He resolved wisely and nobly to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife singing publicly for hire? No, Sir, there can be no doubt here. I know not if I should not *prepare* myself for a public singer, as readily as let my wife be one."

Johnson arraigned the modern politics of this country, as entirely devoid of all principle of whatever kind. "Politics," said he, "are now nothing more than means of rising in the world. With this sole view do men engage in politics, and their whole conduct proceeds upon it. How different in that respect is the state of the nation now from what it was in the time of Charles the First, during the Usurpation, and after the Restoration, in the time of Charles the Second. Hudibras affords a strong proof how much hold political principles had then upon the minds of men. There is in Hudibras a great deal of bullion which will always last. But, to be sure, the brightest strokes of his wit owed their force to the impression of the characters, which was upon men's minds at the time; to their knowing them, at table and in the street; in short, being familiar with them; and above all, to his satire being directed against those whom a little while before they had hated and

feared. The nation in general has ever been loyal, has been at all times attached to the monarch, though a few daring rebels have been wonderfully powerful for a time. The murder of Charles the First was undoubtedly not committed with the approbation or consent of the people; had that been the case, Parliament would not have ventured to consign the regicides to their deserved punishment; and we know what exuberance of joy there was when Charles the Second was restored. If Charles the Second had bent all his mind to it, had made it his sole object, he might have been as absolute as Louis the Fourteenth." A gentleman observed, he would have done no harm if he had. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, absolute princes seldom do any harm. But they who are governed by them are governed by chance. There is no security for good government." CAMBRIDGE: "There have been many sad victims to absolute government." JOHNSON: "So, Sir, have there been to popular factions." BOSWELL: "The question is, which is worst, one wild beast or many?"

Johnson praised "The Spectator," particularly the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. He said, "Sir Roger did not die a violent death, as has been generally fancied. He was not killed; he died only because others were to die, and because his death afforded an opportunity to Addison for some very fine writing. We have the example of Cervantes making Don Quixote die. I never could see why Sir Roger is represented as a little cracked. It appears to me that the story of the widow was intended to have something superinduced upon it; but the superstructure did not come."

Somebody found fault with writing verses in a dead language, maintaining that they were merely arrangements of so many words, and laughed at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, for sending forth collections of them not only in Greek and Latin, but even in Syriac, Arabic, and other more unknown tongues. JOHNSON: "I would have as many of these as possible; I would have verses in every language that there are the means of acquiring. Nobody imagines that an University is to have at once two hundred poets; but it should be able to show two hundred scholars. Peirese's death was lamented, I think, in forty languages. And I would have had at every coronation, and every death of a king, every *Gaudium*, and every *Luctus*, University-verses, in as many languages as can be acquired. I would have the world to be thus told, 'Here is a school where everything may be learnt.'"

Having set out next day on a visit to the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton, and to my friend, Mr. Temple, at Mamhead, in Devonshire, and not having returned to town till the second of May, I did not see Dr. Johnson for a considerable time, and during the remaining part of my stay in London kept very imperfect notes of his conversation, which had I, according to my usual custom, written out at large soon after the

time, much might have been preserved which is now irretrievably lost. I can now only record some particular scenes, and a few fragments of his *memorabilia*. But to make some amends for my relaxation of diligence in one respect, I have to present my readers with arguments upon two law cases, with which he favoured me.

On Saturday, the 6th of May, we dined by ourselves at the Mitre, and he dictated to me what follows, to obviate the complaint already mentioned, which had been made in the form of an action in the Court of Session, by Dr. Memis, of Aberdeen, that in the same translation of a charter in which *physicians* were mentioned, he was called *Doctor of Medicine*.

“There are but two reasons for which a physician can decline the title of *Doctor of Medicine*, because he supposes himself disgraced by the doctorship, or supposes the doctorship disgraced by himself. To be disgraced by a title which he shares in common with every illustrious name of his profession, with Boerhaave, with Arbuthnot, and with Cullen, can surely diminish no man's reputation. It is, I suppose, to the doctorate from which he shrinks, that he holds his rights of practising physic. A Doctor of Medicine is a physician under the protection of the laws, and by the stamp of authority. The physician who is not a doctor, usurps a profession, and is authorised only by himself to decide upon health and sickness, and life and death. That this gentleman is a Doctor his diploma makes evident; a diploma not obtruded upon him, but obtained by solicitation, and for which fees were paid. With what countenance any man can refuse the title which he has either begged or bought, is not easily discovered.

“All verbal injury must comprise in it either some false position or some unnecessary declaration of defamatory truth. That in calling him Doctor, a false appellation was given him, he himself will not pretend, who at the same time that he complains of the title would be offended if we supposed him to be not a doctor. If the title of Doctor be a defamatory truth, it is time to dissolve our colleges; for why should the public give salaries to men whose approbation is reproach? It may likewise deserve the notice of the public to consider what help can be given to the professors of physic, who all share with this unhappy gentleman the ignominious appellation, and of whom the very boys in the street are not afraid to say, ‘*There goes the Doctor.*’

“What is implied by the term Doctor is well known. It distinguishes him to whom it is granted, as a man who has attained such knowledge of his profession as qualifies him to instruct others. A Doctor of Laws is a man who can form lawyers by his precepts. A Doctor of Medicine is a man who can teach the art of curing diseases. This is an old axiom which no man has yet thought fit to deny, *Nil dat quod non habet*. Upon this principle, to be Doctor implies skill, for *nemo docet quod non didicit*. In England, whoever practises physic, not being a Doctor, must practise by a license; but the doctorate conveys a license in itself.

“By what accident it happened that he and the other physicians were mentioned in different terms, where the terms themselves were equivalent, or where, in effect, that which was applied to him was the most honourable,



perhaps they who wrote the paper cannot now remember. Had they expected a lawsuit to have been the consequence of such petty variation, I hope they would have avoided it.<sup>1</sup> But, probably, as they meant no ill, they suspected no danger, and therefore, consulted only what appeared to them propriety or convenience."

A few days afterwards, I consulted him upon a cause, *Paterson and others against Alexander and others*, which had been decided by a casting vote in the Court of Session, determining that the Corporation of Stirling was corrupt, and setting aside the election of some of their officers because it was proved that three of the leading men who influenced the majority, had entered into an unjustifiable compact, of which, however, the majority were ignorant. He dictated to me, after a little consideration, the following sentences upon the subject :

"There is a difference between majority and superiority ; majority is applied to number, and superiority to power ; and power, like many other things, is to be estimated *non numero sed pondere*. Now though the greater *number* is not corrupt, the greater *weight* is corrupt, so that corruption predominates in the borough, taken *collectively*, though, perhaps, taken *numerically*, the greater part may be uncorrupt. That borough, which is so constituted as to act corruptly, is in the eye of reason corrupt, whether it be by the uncontrollable power of a few, or by an accidental pravity of the multitude. The objection in which is urged the injustice of making the innocent suffer with the guilty, is an objection not only against society, but against the possibility of society. All societies, great and small, subsist upon this condition ; that as the individuals derive advantages from union, they may likewise suffer inconveniences ; that as those who do nothing, and sometimes those who do ill, will have the honours and emoluments of general virtue and general prosperity, so those likewise who do nothing, or perhaps do well, must be involved in the consequences of predominant corruption."

This in my opinion was a very nice case ; but the decision was affirmed in the House of Lords.

On Monday, May 8, we went together and visited the mansions of Bedlam. I had been informed that he had once been there before with Mr. Wedderburn (now Lord Loughborough), Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Foote ; and I had heard Foote give a very entertaining account of Johnson's happening to have his attention arrested by a man who was very furious, and who, while beating his straw, supposed it was William Duke of Cumberland, whom he was punishing for his cruelties in Scotland, in 1746.<sup>2</sup> There was nothing peculiarly remarkable this day ;

<sup>1</sup> In justice to Dr. Memis, though I was against him as an Advocate, I must mention that he objected to the variation very earnestly, before the translation was printed off.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> My very honourable friend, General Sir George Howard, who served in the Duke of Cumberland's army, has assured me that the cruelties were not imputable to his Royal Highness.—BOSWELL.

but the general contemplation of insanity was very affecting. I accompanied him home, and dined and drank tea with him.

Talking of an acquaintance of ours, distinguished for knowing an uncommon variety of miscellaneous articles both in antiquities and polite literature, he observed, "You know, Sir, he runs about with little weight upon his mind." And talking of another very ingenious gentleman, who from the warmth of his temper was at variance with many of his acquaintance, and wished to avoid them, he said, "Sir, he leads the life of an outlaw."

On Friday, May 12, as he had been so good as to assign me a room in his house, where I might sleep occasionally, when I happened to sit with him to a late hour, I took possession of it this night, found every thing in excellent order, and was attended by honest Francis with a most civil assiduity. I asked Johnson whether I might go to a consultation with another lawyer upon Sunday, as that appeared to me to be doing work as much in my way, as if an artisan should work on the day appropriated for religious rest: JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, when you are of consequence enough to oppose the practice of consulting upon Sunday, you should do it: but you may go now. It is not criminal, though it is not what one should do who is anxious for the preservation and increase of piety, to which a peculiar observance of Sunday is a great help. The distinction is clear between what is of moral and what is of ritual obligation."

On Saturday, May 13, I breakfasted with him by invitation, accompanied by Mr. Andrew Crosbie, a Scotch Advocate, whom he had seen at Edinburgh, and the Hon. Colonel (now General) Edward Stopford, brother to Lord Courtown, who was desirous of being introduced to him. His tea, and rolls, and butter, and whole breakfast apparatus, were all in such decorum, and his behaviour was so courteous, that Colonel Stopford was quite surprised, and wondered at his having heard so much said of Johnson's slovenliness and roughness. I have preserved nothing of what passed, except that Crosbie pleased him much by talking learnedly of alchymy, as to which Johnson was not a positive unbeliever, but rather delighted in considering what progress had actually been made in the transmutation of metals, what near approaches there had been to the making of gold; and told us that it was affirmed, that a person in the Russian dominions had discovered the secret, but died without revealing it, as imagining it would be prejudicial to society. He added, that it was not impossible but it might in time be generally known.

It being asked whether it was reasonable for a man to be angry at another whom a woman had preferred to him,—JOHNSON: "I do not see, Sir, that it is reasonable for a man to be angry at another, whom a woman has preferred to him: but angry he is, no doubt; and he is loth to be angry at himself."

Before setting out for Scotland on the 23rd, I was frequently in his company at different places, but during this period have recorded only two remarks; one concerning Garrick: "He has not Latin enough. He finds out the Latin by the meaning, rather than the meaning by the Latin:" and another concerning writers of travels, who, he observed, "were more defective than any other writers."

I passed many hours with him on the 17th, of which I find all my memorial is, "much laughing." It should seem he had that day been in a humour for jocularly and merriment, and upon such occasions I never knew a man laugh more heartily. We may suppose, that the high relish of a state so different from his habitual gloom, produced more than ordinary exertions of that distinguishing faculty of man, which has puzzled philosophers so much to explain. Johnson's laugh was as remarkable as any circumstance in his manner. It was a kind of good-humoured growl. Tom Davies described it drolly enough: "He laughs like a rhinoceros."

" TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

" DEAR SIR,

*May 21, 1775.*

"I have an old amanuensis in great distress. I have given what I think I can give, and begged till I cannot tell where to beg again. I put into his hands this morning four guineas. If you could collect three guineas more, it would clear him from his present difficulty.

"I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

" TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" DEAR SIR,

*May 27, 1775.*

"I make no doubt but you are now safely lodged in your own habitation, and have told all your adventures to Mrs. Boswell and Miss Veronica. Pray teach Veronica to love me. Bid her not mind manna.

"Mrs. Thrale has taken cold, and been very much disordered, but I hope is grown well. Mr. Langton went yesterday to Lincolnshire, and has invited Nicolaida<sup>1</sup> to follow him. Beauclerk talks of going to Bath. I am to set out on Monday; so there is nothing but dispersion.

"I have returned Lord Hailes's entertaining sheets, but must stay till I come back for more, because it will be inconvenient to send them after me in my vagrant state.

"I promised Mrs. Macaulay<sup>2</sup> that I would try to serve her son at Oxford. I have not forgotten it, nor am unwilling to perform it. If they desire to give him an English education, it should be considered whether they cannot send him for a year or two to an English school. If he comes immediately from Scotland, he can make no figure in our Universities. The schools in the North, I believe, are cheap; and, when I was a young man, were eminently good.

<sup>1</sup> A learned Greek.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of the Reverend Mr. Kenneth Macaulay, author of "The History of St. Kilda."—BOSWELL.

“There are two little books published by the Foulis, ‘Telemachus,’ and ‘Collins’s Poems,’ each a shilling; I would be glad to have them.

“Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, though she does not love me. You see what perverse things ladies are, and how little fit to be trusted with feudal estates. When she mends and loves me, there may be more hope of her daughters.

“I will not send compliments to my friends by name, because I would be loth to leave any out in the enumeration. Tell them, as you see them, how well I speak of Scotch politeness, and Scotch hospitality, and Scotch beauty, and of everything Scotch, but Scotch oat-cakes, and Scotch prejudices.

“Let me know the answer of Rasay, and the decision relating to Sir Allan.<sup>1</sup>

“I am, my dearest Sir, with great affection,

“Your most obliged and most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.

After my return to Scotland, I wrote three letters to him, from which I extract the following passages:—

“I have seen Lord Hailes since I came down. He thinks it wonderful that you are pleased to take so much pains in revising his ‘Annals.’ I told him that you said you were well rewarded by the entertainment which you had in reading them.

“There has been a numerous flight of Hebrideans in Edinburgh this summer, whom I have been happy to entertain at my house. Mr. Donald Macqueen,<sup>2</sup> and Lord Monboddo supped with me one evening. They joined in controverting your proposition, that the Gaelic of the Highlands and Isles of Scotland was not written till of late.

“My mind has been somewhat dark this summer. I have need of your warming and vivifying rays; and I hope I shall have them frequently. I am going to pass some time with my father at Auchinleck.”

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“DEAR SIR,

*London, August 27, 1775.*

“I am returned from the annual ramble into the middle counties. Having seen nothing I had not seen before, I have nothing to relate. Time has left that part of the island few antiquities; and commerce has left the people no singularities. I was glad to go abroad, and, perhaps, glad to come home; which is, in other words, I was, I am afraid, weary of being at home, and weary of being abroad. Is not this the state of life? But, if we confess this weariness, let us not lament it; for all the wise and all the good say, that we may cure it.

“For the black fumes which rise in your mind, I can prescribe nothing but that you disperse them by honest business or innocent pleasure, and by reading, sometimes easy, and sometimes serious. Change of place is useful; and I hope that your residence at Auchinleck will have many good effects.

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> A law-suit carried on by Sir Allan Maclean, chief of his clan, to recover certain parts of his family estates from the Duke of Argyle.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> A very learned minister in the Isle of Skye, whom both Dr. Johnson and I have mentioned with regard.—BOSWELL.

“That I should have given pain to Rasay, I am sincerely sorry; and am therefore very much pleased that he is no longer uneasy. He still thinks that I have represented him as personally giving up the Chieftainship. I meant only that it was no longer contested between the two houses, and supposed it settled, perhaps, by the cession of some remote generation, in the house of Dunvegan. I am sorry the advertisement was not continued for three or four times in the paper.

“That Lord Monboddo and Mr. Macqucen should controvert a position contrary to the imaginary interest of literary or national prejudice, might be easily imagined; but of a standing fact there ought to be no controversy; if there are men with tails, catch an *homo caudatus*; if there was writing of old in the Highlands or Hebrides, in the Erse language, produce the manuscripts. Where men write, they will write to one another; and some of their letters, in families studious of their ancestry, will be kept. In Wales there are many manuscripts.

“I have now three parcels of Lord Hailes's history, which I purpose to return all the next week: that his respect for my little observations should keep his work in suspense, makes one of the evils of my journey. It is in our language, I think, a new mode of history which tells all that is wanted, and, I suppose, all that is known, without laboured splendour of language, or affected subtlety of conjecture. The exactness of his dates raises my wonder. He seems to have the closeness of Henault without his constraint.

“Mrs. Thrale was so entertained with your ‘Journal,’<sup>1</sup> that she almost read herself blind. She has a great regard for you.

“Of Mrs. Boswell, though she knows in her heart that she does not love me, I am always glad to hear any good, and hope that she and the little dear ladies will have neither sickness nor any other affliction. But she knows that she does not care what becomes of me, and for that she may be sure that I think her very much to blame.

“Never, my dear Sir, do you take it into your head to think that I do not love you; you may settle yourself in full confidence both of my love and my esteem; I love you as a kind man, I value you as a worthy man, and hope in time to reverence you as a man of exemplary piety. I hold you, as Hamlet has it, ‘in my heart of hearts,’ and, therefore, it is little to say, that I am, Sir,

“Your affectionate humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

TO THE SAME.

“SIR,

August 30, 1775.

“If in these papers<sup>2</sup> there is little alteration attempted, do not suppose me negligent. I have read them perhaps more closely than the rest; but I find nothing worthy of an objection.

“Write to me soon, and write often, and tell me all your honest heart.

“I am, Sir,

“Yours affectionately,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

<sup>1</sup> My “Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,” which that lady read in the original manuscript.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Another parcel of Lord Hailes's “Annals of Scotland.”—BOSWELL.

## TO THE SAME.

“ My DEAR SIR,

*September 14, 1775.*

“ I now write to you, lest in some of your freaks and humours you should fancy yourself neglected. Such fancies I must entreat you never to admit, at least never to indulge; for my regard for you is so radiated and fixed, that it is become part of my mind, and cannot be effaced but by some cause uncommonly violent; therefore whether I write or not, set your thoughts at rest. I now write to tell you that I shall not very soon write again, for I am to set out to-morrow on another journey.

\* \* \* \* \*

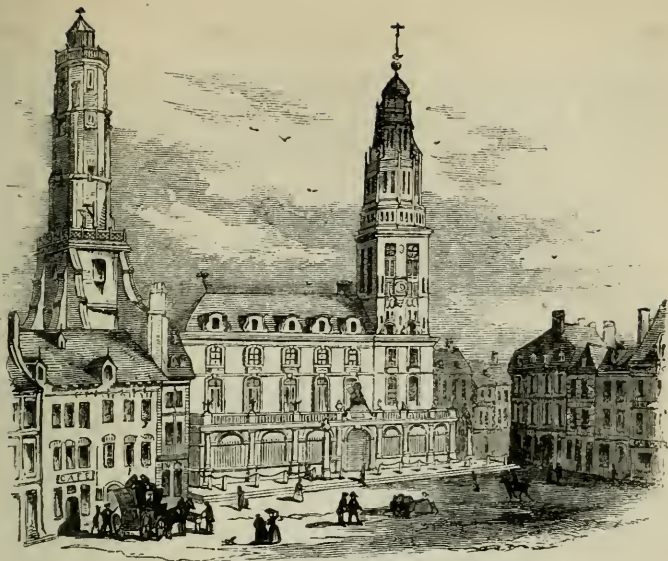
“ Your friends are all well at Streatham and in Leicester-fields.<sup>1</sup> Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, if she is in good humour with me.

“ I am, Sir, &c.,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

<sup>1</sup> Where Sir Joshua Reynolds lived.—BOSWELL.





CALAIS.

## CHAPTER XII.—1775.

JOHNSON ACCOMPANIES MR. AND MRS. THRALE ON A TOUR TO FRANCE—PARIS—ECOLE MILITAIRE—THE GOBELINS—PALAIS ROYAL—MRS. FERMOR—PALAIS BOURBON—FONTAINEBLEAU—VERSAILLES AND TRIANON—SANTERRE THE BREWER—THE KING'S LIBRARY—THE SORBONNE—ST. CLOUD—SEVRE—GRAND CHARTREUSE—LIBRARY OF ST. GERMAIN—DEPARTURE FROM PARIS—CHANTILLY—COMPEIGNE—CAMBRAY.

WHAT he mentions in such light terms as, "I am to set out to-morrow on another journey," I soon afterwards discovered was no less than a tour to France with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. This was the only time in his life that he went upon the Continent.

" TO MR. ROBERT LEVET.

" DEAR SIR,

*Calais, Sept. 13, 1775.*

" We are here in France, after a very pleasing passage of no more than six hours. I know not when I shall write again, and therefore I write now, though you cannot suppose that I have much to say. You have seen France yourself. From this place we are going to Rouen, and from Rouen to Paris, where Mr. Thrale designs to stay about five or six weeks. We have a regular recommendation to the English resident, so we shall not be taken for vagabonds

We think to go one way and return another, and see as much as we can. I will try to speak a little French: I tried hitherto but little, but I spoke sometimes. If I heard better, I suppose I should learn faster.

“ I am, Sir, your humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

TO THE SAME.

“ DEAR SIR,

*Paris, Oct. 23, 1775.*

“ We are still here, commonly very busy in looking about us. We have been to-day at Versailles. You have seen it, and I shall not describe it. We came yesterday from Fontainebleau, where the Court is now. We went to see the King and Queen at dinner, and the Queen was so impressed by Miss,<sup>1</sup> that she sent one of the gentlemen to inquire who she was. I find all true that you have ever told me of Paris. Mr. Thrale is very liberal, and keeps us two coaches, and a very fine table; but I think our cookery very bad. Mrs. Thrale got into a convent of English nuns, and I talked with her through the grate, and I am very kindly used by the English Benedictine friars. But upon the whole I cannot make much acquaintance here; and though the churches, palaces, and some private houses are very magnificent, there is no very great pleasure after having seen many, in seeing more; at least the pleasure, whatever it be, must some time have an end, and we are beginning to think when we shall come home. Mr. Thrale calculates that as we left Streatham on the 15th of September, we shall see it again about the 15th of November.

“ I think I had not been on this side of the sea five days before I found a sensible improvement in my health. I ran a race in the rain this day, and beat Baretti. Baretti is a fine fellow, and speaks French, I think, quite as well as English.

“ Make my compliments to Mrs. Williams; and give my love to Francis, and tell my friends that I am not lost. I am, dear Sir,

“ Your affectionate humble, &c.,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

*Edinburgh, Oct. 24, 1775.*

“ If I had not been informed that you were at Paris, you should have had a letter from me by the earliest opportunity, announcing the birth of my son, on the 9th instant; I have named him Alexander, after my father. I now write, as I suppose your fellow-traveller, Mr. Thrale, will return to London this week, to attend his duty in Parliament, and that you will not stay behind him.

“ I send another parcel of Lord Hailes's ‘Annals.’ I have undertaken to solicit you for a favour to him, which he thus requests in a letter to me: ‘I intend soon to give you “The Life of Robert Bruce,” which you will be pleased to transmit to Dr. Johnson. I wish that you could assist me in a fancy which I have taken, of getting Dr. Johnson to draw a character of Robert Bruce, from the account that I give of that prince. If he finds materials for it in my work,

<sup>1</sup> Miss Thrale.—BOSWELL



it will be a proof that I have been fortunate in selecting the most striking incidents.'

"I suppose by *The Life of Robert Bruce*, his lordship means that part of his 'Annals' which relates the history of that prince, and not a separate work.

"Shall we have *A Journey to Paris* from you in the winter? You will, I hope, at any rate, be kind enough to give me some account of your French travels very soon, for I am very impatient. What a different scene have you viewed this autumn, from that which you viewed in autumn 1773! I ever am, my dear Sir,

Your much obliged and

"Affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

November 16, 1775.

"I am glad that the young laird is born, and an end, as I hope, put to the only difference that you can ever have with Mrs. Boswell.<sup>1</sup> I know that she does not love me; but I intend to persist in wishing her well till I get the better of her.

"Paris is, indeed, a place very different from the Hebrides, but it is to a hasty traveller not so fertile of novelty, nor affords so many opportunities of remark. I cannot pretend to tell the public anything of a place better known to many of my readers than to myself. We can talk of it when we meet.

"I shall go next week to Streatham, from whence I purpose to send a parcel of the 'History' every post. Concerning the character of Bruce, I can only say, that I do not see any great reason for writing it; but I shall not easily deny what Lord Hailes and you concur in desiring.

"I have been remarkably healthy all the journey, and hope you and your family have known only that trouble and danger which has so happily terminated. Among all the congratulations that you may receive, I hope you believe none more warm or sincere, than those of, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.<sup>2</sup>

"DEAR MADAM,

November 16, 1775.

"This week I came home from Paris. I have brought you a little box, which I thought pretty; but I know not whether it is properly a snuff-box, or a box for some other use. I will send it, when I can find an opportunity. I have been through the whole journey remarkably well. My fellow-travellers were the same whom you saw at Lichfield, only we took Baretti with us. Paris is not so fine a place as you would expect. The palaces and churches, however,

<sup>1</sup> This alludes to my old feudal principle of preferring male to female succession.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt that, many years previous to 1775, he corresponded with this lady, who was his step-daughter, but none of his earliest letters to her have been preserved.—BOSWELL.

Since the death of the author, several of Johnson's letters to Mrs. Lucy Porter, written before 1775, were obligingly communicated to me by the Rev. Dr. Vyse, and are printed in the present edition.—MALONE.

are very splendid and magnificent; and what would please you, there are many very fine pictures; but I do not think their way of life commodious or pleasant.

“Let me know how your health has been all this while. I hope the fine summer has given you strength sufficient to encounter the winter.

“Make my compliments to all my friends; and if your fingers will let you, write to me, or let your maid write to me, if it be troublesome to you.

I am, dear Madam,

“Your most affectionate humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

TO THE SAME.

“DEAR MADAM,

*December, 1775.*

“Some weeks ago I wrote to you to tell you that I was just come home from a ramble, and hoped that I should have heard from you. I am afraid winter has laid hold on your fingers, and hinders you from writing. However, let somebody write, if you cannot, and tell me how you do, and a little of what has happened at Lichfield among our friends. I hope you are all well.

“When I was in France, I thought myself growing young, but am afraid that cold weather will take part of my new vigour from me. Let us, however, take care of ourselves, and lose no part of our health by negligence.

“I never knew whether you received the Commentary on the New Testament, and the Travels, and the glasses.

“Do, my dear love, write to me; and do not let us forget each other. This is the season of good wishes, and I wish you all good. I have not lately seen Mr. Porter,<sup>1</sup> nor heard of him. Is he with you?

“Be pleased to make my compliments to Mrs. Adey, and Mrs. Cobb, and all my friends; and when I can do any good, let me know. I am, dear Madam,

“Yours most affectionately,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

It is to be regretted, that he did not write an account of his travels in France; for as he is reported to have once said, that “he could write the life of a broomstick,”<sup>2</sup> so, notwithstanding so many former travellers have exhausted almost every subject for remark in that great kingdom, his very accurate observation, and peculiar vigour of thought and illustration, would have produced a valuable work. During his visit to it, which lasted but about two months, he wrote notes or minutes of what he saw. He promised to show me them, but I neglected to put him in mind of it; and the greatest part of them has been lost, or, perhaps, destroyed in a precipitate burning of his papers a few days before his death, which must ever be lamented. One small paper-book, however, entitled “FRANCE II,” has been preserved, and is in my possession. It is a diurnal register of his life and observations, from

<sup>1</sup> Son of Mrs. Johnson, by her first husband.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> It is probable that the author's memory here deceived him, and that he was thinking of Stella's remark, that Swift could write finely upon a broomstick. See Johnson's Life of Swift.—J. BOSWELL, JUN.

the 10th of October, to the 4th of November, inclusive, being twenty-six days, and shows an extraordinary attention to various minute particulars. Being the only memorial of this tour that remains, my readers, I am confident, will peruse it with pleasure, though his notes are very short, and evidently written only to assist his own recollection.

“*Tuesday, Oct. 10.* We saw the *Ecole Militaire*, in which one hundred and fifty young boys are educated for the army. They have arms of different sizes, according to the age;—flints of wood. The building is very large, but nothing fine except the council-room. The French have large squares in the windows;—they make good iron palisades. Their meals are gross.

“We visited the observatory, a large building of a great height. The upper stones of the parapet very large, but not cramped with iron. The flat on the top is very extensive; but on the insulated part there is no parapet. Though it was broad enough, I did not care to go upon it. Maps were printing in one of the rooms.

“We walked to a small convent of the Fathers of the Oratory. In the reading-desk of the refectory lay the Lives of the Saints.

“*Wednesday, Oct. 11.* We went to the *Hôtel de Chatlois*, a house not very large, but very elegant. One of the rooms was gilt to a degree that I never saw before. The upper part for servants and their masters was pretty.

“Thence we went to Mr. Monville's, a house divided into small apartments, furnished with effeminate and minute elegance.—Porphyry.

“Thence we went to St. Roque's [*Roch*] Church, which is very large;—the lower part of the pillars incrustated with marble.—Three chapels behind the high altar; the last a mass of low arches.—Altars, I believe, all round.

“We passed through *Place de Vendôme*, a fine square, about as big as Hanover Square.—Inhabited by the high families.—Louis XIV. on horseback in the middle.

“Monville is the son of a farmer-general. In the house of *Chatlois* is a room furnished with japan, fitted up in Europe.

“We dined with Bocage, the Marquis Blanchetti, and his lady. The sweetmeats taken by the Marchioness Blanchetti, after observing that they were dear. Mr. Le Roy, Count Manucci, the Abbé, the Prior, and Father Wilson, who stayed with me, till I took him home in the coach.

“Bathiani is gone.

“The French have no laws for the maintenance of their poor.—Monk not necessarily a priest.—Benedictines rise at four;—are at church an hour and half; at church again half an hour before, half an hour after, dinner; and again from half an hour after seven to eight. They may sleep eight hours. Bodily labour wanted in monasteries.

“The poor taken to hospitals, and miserably kept.—Monks in the convent, fifteen:—accounted poor.

“*Thursday, Oct. 12.* We went to the Gobelins.—Tapestry makes a good picture: imitates flesh exactly.—One piece with a gold ground; the birds not exactly coloured.—Thence we went to the King's cabinet; very neat, not perhaps perfect.—Gold ore.—Candles of the candle-tree.—Seeds.—Woods.—Thence to Gagnier's house, where I saw rooms nine, furnished with a profusion

of wealth and elegance which I had never seen before.—Vases.—Pictures.—The dragon china.—The lustre said to be of crystal, and to have cost 3500*l.*—The whole furniture said to have cost 125,000*l.*—Damask hangings covered with pictures.—Porphyry.—This house struck me.—Then we waited on the ladies to Monville's.—Captain Irwin with us.<sup>1</sup>—Spain.—Country towns all beggars.—At Dijon he could not find the way to Orleans.—Cross roads of France very bad.—Five soldiers.—Woman.—Soldiers escaped.—The Colonel would not lose five men for the death of one woman.—The magistrates cannot seize a soldier but by the Colonel's permission.—Good inn at Nismes.—Moors of Barbary fond of Englishmen.—Gibraltar eminently healthy; it has beef from Barbary.—There is a large garden.—Soldiers sometimes fall from the rock.

"*Friday, Oct. 13.* I stayed at home all day, only went to find the Prior, who was not at home. I read something in Canus.<sup>2</sup>—*Nec admiror, nec multum laudo.*

"*Saturday, Oct. 14.* We went to the house of Mr. [D] Argenson, which was almost wainscotted with looking-glasses, and covered with gold.—The ladies' closet wainscotted with large squares of glass over painted paper. They always place mirrors to reflect their rooms.

"Then we went to Julien's, the Treasurer of the Clergy; 30,000*l.* a year.—The house has no very large room, but is set with mirrors, and covered with gold.—Books of wood here, and in another library.

"At D' [Argenson's] I looked into the books in the lady's closet, and, in contempt, showed them to Mr. T[hrale].—*Prince Titi; Bibl. des Fées*, and other books. She was offended, and shut up, as we heard afterwards, her apartment.

"Then we went to Julien Le Roy, the King's watchmaker, a man of character in his business, who showed a small clock made to find the longitude.—A decent man.

"Afterwards we saw the Palais Marchand, and the Courts of Justice, civil and criminal.—Queries on the Sellette.—This building has the old Gothic passages, and a great appearance of antiquity.—Three hundred prisoners sometimes in the gaol.

"Much disturbed; hope no ill will be.<sup>3</sup>

"In the afternoon I visited Mr. Freron,<sup>4</sup> the journalist. He spoke Latin very scantily, but seemed to understand me.—His house not splendid, but of commodious size.—His family, wife, son, and daughter, not elevated, but decent.—I was pleased with my reception.—He is to translate my books, which I am to send him with notes.

"*Sunday, Oct. 15.* At Choisi, a royal palace on the banks of the Seine, about seven miles from Paris.—The terrace noble along the river.—The

<sup>1</sup> The rest of this paragraph appears to be a minute of what was told by Capt. Irwin.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Melchior Canus, a celebrated Spanish Dominican, who died at Toledo, in 1560. He wrote a treatise, *De Locis Theologicis*, in Twelve books.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> This passage, which so many think superstitious, reminds me of Archbishop Laud's Diary.—BOSWELL.

<sup>4</sup> Elie Catherine Freron, a celebrated French critic, and powerful opponent of Voltaire, was born at Quimper in 1719. He was originally a Jesuit, but quitted the society at the age of 20. He died in the year following Johnson's visit to Paris; and therefore the contemplated translation of the Doctor's works was put an end to.—ED.

rooms numerous and grand, but not discriminated from other palaces.—The chapel beautiful, but small.—China globes.—Inlaid tables.—Labyrinth.—Sinking table.—Toilet tables.

“Monday, Oct. 16. The Palais Royal very grand, large, and lofty.—A very great collection of pictures.—Three of Raphael.—Two Holy Family.—One small piece of M. Angelo.—One room of Rubens.—I thought the pictures of Raphael fine.

“The Tuileries.—Statues.—Venus.—Æn. and Anchises in his arms.—Nilus.—Many more.—The walks not open to mean persons.—Chairs at night hired for two sous a-piece.—Pont tournant.

“Austin Nuns.—Grate.—Mrs. Fermor, Abbess. She knew Pope, and thought him disagreeable.—Mrs. — has many books; has seen life.—Their frontlet disagreeable.—Their hood.—Their life easy.—Rise about five; hour and half at chapel; dine at ten. Another hour and a half at chapel—half an hour about three, and half an hour more at seven; four hours in chapel.—A large garden.—Thirteen pensioners.—Teacher complained.

“At the Boulevards saw nothing, yet was glad to be there.—Rope-dancing and farce.—Egg-dance.

“N. [Note.] Near Paris, whether on week-days or Sundays, the roads empty.

“Tuesday, Oct. 17. At the Palais Marchand I bought

A snuff-box	.	.	.	.	.	24 livres.
—————	.	.	.	.	.	6 „
Table book	.	.	.	.	.	15 „
Scissors 3 p (pair)	.	.	.	.	.	18 „

(Livres) . . . 63—£2 12s. 6d.

“We heard the lawyers plead.—N. As many killed at Paris as there are days in the year.—*Chambre de question*.—Tournelle at the Palais Marchand.—An old venerable building.

“The Palais Bourbon, belonging to the Prince of Condé. Only one small wing shown;—lofty;—splendid;—gold and glass.—The battles of the great Condé are painted in one of the rooms. The present Prince a grandsire at thirty-nine.

“The sight of palaces, and other great buildings, leaves no very distinct images, unless to those who talk of them. As I entered, my wife was in my mind:<sup>1</sup> she would have been pleased. Having now nobody to please, I am little pleased.

“N. In France there is no middle rank.

“So many shops open, that Sunday is little distinguished at Paris.—The palaces of Louvre and Tuileries granted out in lodgings.

“In the *Palais de Bourbon*, gilt globes of metal at the fire-place.

“The French beds commended.—Much of the marble only paste.

“The colosseum a mere wooden building, at least much of it.

“Wednesday, Oct. 18. We went to Fontainebleau, which we found a large mean town, crowded with people.—The forest thick with woods, very extensive.—Manucci secured us lodgings.—The appearance of the country pleasant. No.

<sup>1</sup> His tender affection for his departed wife, of which there are many evidences in his “Prayers and Meditations,” appears very feelingly in this passage.—BOSWELL.

hills, few streams, only one hedge.—I remember no chapels nor crosses on the road.—Pavement still, and rows of trees.

“N. Nobody but mean people walk in Paris.

“*Thursday*, Oct. 19. At court, we saw the apartments;—the King's bed-chamber and council-chamber extremely splendid.—Persons of all ranks in the external rooms through which the family passes; servants and masters.—Brunet with us the second time.

“The introducer came to us;—civil to me.—Presenting.—I had scruples—Not necessary.—We went and saw the king and queen at dinner.—We saw the other ladies at dinner—Madame Elizabeth, with the Princess of Guimené.—At night we went to a comedy. I neither saw nor heard.—Drunken women.—Mrs. T [hrale] preferred one to the other.

“*Friday*, Oct. 20. We saw the queen mount in the forest.—Brown habit: rode aside: one lady rode aside.—The queen's horse light grey;—martingale.—She galloped.—We then went to the apartments, and admired them.—Then wandered through the palace.—In the passages, stalls, and shops.—Painting in fresco by a great master, worn out.—We saw the king's horses and dogs.—The dogs almost all English.—Degenerate.

“The horses not much commended.—The stables cool; the kennel filthy.

“At night the ladies went to the Opera. I refused, but should have been welcome.

“The king fed himself with his left hand, as we.

“*Saturday*, Oct. 21. In the night I got round.—We came home to Paris.—I think we did not see the chapel.—Tree broken by the wind—The French chairs made all of boards painted.

“N. Soldiers at the court of justice.—Soldiers not amenable to the magistrates.—Dijon woman.

“Faggots in the palace.—Everything slovenly, except in the chief rooms.—Trees in the roads, some tall, none old, many very young and small.

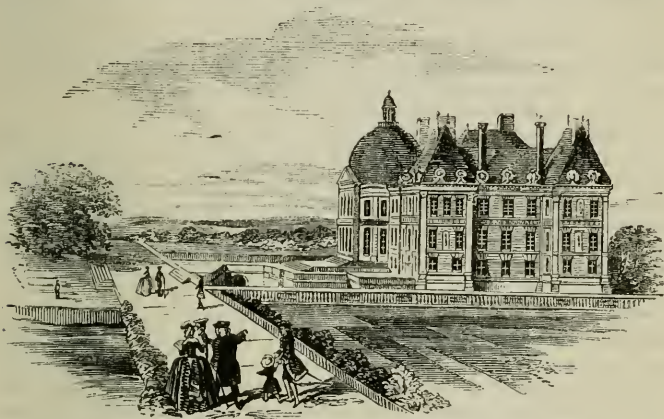
“Women's saddles seem ill-made. Queen's bridle woven with silver.—Tags to strike the horse.

“*Sunday*, Oct. 22. To Versailles, a mean town. Carriages of business passing.—Mean shops against the wall.—Our way lay through Sève (Sèvres), where is the china manufacture.—Wooden bridge at Sève, in the way to Versailles.—The palace of great extent.—The front long; I saw it not perfectly.—The Menagerie. Cygnets dark; their black feet; on the ground; tame.—Halcyons, or gulls.—Stag and hind, young.—A viary, very large: the net, wire.—Black stag of China, small.—Rhinoceros, the horn broken and pared away, which, I suppose, will grow; the basis, I think, four inches across; the skin folds like loose cloth doubled over his body, and cross his hips; a vast animal, though young: as big, perhaps, as four oxen.—The young elephant, with his tusks just appearing.—The brown bear put out his paws;—all very tame.—The lion.—The tigers I did not well view.—The camel or dromedary with two bunches called the Huguin,<sup>1</sup> taller than any horse.—Two camels with one bunch.—Among the birds was a pelican, who being let out, went to a fountain, and swam about to catch fish. His feet well webbed: he dipped his head,

<sup>1</sup>This epithet should be applied to this animal with one bunch.—BOSWELL.

and turned his long bill sidewise. He caught two or three fish, but did not eat them.

"Trianon is a kind of retreat appendant to Versailles. It has an open portico; the pavement, and I think, the pillars of marble.—There are many rooms which I do not distinctly remember.—A table of porphyry, about five feet long, and between two and three broad, given to Louis XIV. by the Venetian State.—In the council-room almost all that was not door or window, was, I think, looking-glass.—Little Trianon is a small palace like a gentleman's house.—The upper floor paved with brick.—Little Vienne.—The court is ill paved. The rooms at the top are small, fit to soothe the imagination with privacy. In the front of Versailles are small basons of water on the terrace, and



VERSAILLES.

other basons, I think, below them. There are little courts.—The great gallery is wainscotted with mirrors, not very large, but joined by frames. I suppose the large plates were not yet made.—The playhouse<sup>1</sup> was very large.—The chapel I do not remember if we saw.—We saw one chapel, but I am not certain whether there or at Trianon. The foreign office paved with bricks.—The dinner half a louis each, and, I think, a louis over.—Money given at menagerie, three livres; at palace, six livres.

"*Monday, Oct. 23.* Last night I wrote to Levet.—We went to see the looking-glasses wrought. They come from Normandy in cast plates, perhaps the third of an inch thick. At Paris they are ground upon a marble table, by rubbing one plate upon another with grit between them. The various sands, of which there are said to be five, I could not learn. The handle, by which

<sup>1</sup> "When at Versailles, the people showed us the theatre. As we stood on the stage looking at some machinery for playhouse purposes—'Now we are here, what shall we act, Dr. Johnson? The Englishman at Paris?'—'No, no,' replied he, 'we will try to act Harry the Fifth.'"—Mrs. Piozzl

the upper glass is moved, has the form of a wheel, which may be moved in all directions. The plates are sent up with their surfaces ground, but not polished, and so continue till they are bespoken, lest time should spoil the surface, as we are told. Those that are to be polished, are laid on a table covered with several thick cloths, hard strained, that the resistance may be equal: they are then rubbed with a hand rubber, held down hard by a contrivance which I did not well understand. The powder which is used last seemed to me to be iron dissolved in aquafortis: they called it, as Baretti said, *marc de l'eau forte*, which he thought was dregs. They mentioned vitriol and saltpetre. The cannon-ball swam in the quicksilver. To silver them, a leaf of beaten tin is laid, and rubbed with quicksilver, to which it unites. Then more quicksilver is poured upon it, which, by its mutual [attraction] rises very high. Then a paper is laid at the nearest end of the plate, over which the glass is slid till it lies upon the plate, having driven much of the quicksilver before it. It is then, I think, pressed upon cloth, and then set sloping to drop the superfluous mercury: the slope is daily heightened towards a perpendicular.

"In the way I saw the Grève, the mayor's house, and the Bastile.

"We then went to Sans-terre, a brewer.<sup>1</sup> He brews with about as much malt as Mr. Thrale, and sells his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt, and little more than half as much for beer. Beer is sold retail at 6d. a bottle. He brews 4000 barrels a-year. There are seventeen brewers in Paris, of whom none is supposed to brew more than he; reckoning them at 3000 each, they make 51,000 a-year. They make their malt, for malting is here no trade.

"The moat of the Bastile is dry.

"Tuesday, Oct. 24. We visited the king's library—I saw the *Speculum humanæ Salvationis*, rudely printed, with ink, sometimes pale, sometimes black; part supposed to be with wooden types, and part with pages cut in boards. The Bible, supposed to be older than that of Mentz, in '62; it has no date; it is supposed to have been printed with wooden types.—I am in doubt; the print is large and fair, in two folios. Another book was shown me, supposed to have been printed with wooden types; I think *Durandi Sanctuarium* in '58. This is inferred from the difference of form sometimes seen in the same letter, which might be struck with different puncheons. The regular similitude of most letters proves better that they are metal. I saw nothing but the *Speculum*, which I had not seen, I think, before.

"Thence to the Sorbonne.—The library very large, not in lattices like the king's. *Marbone* and *Durandi*, q. collection, 14 vol. *Scriptores de rebus Gallicis*, many folios.—*Histoire Généalogique of France*, 9 vol.—*Gallia Christiana*, the first edition, 4to. the last, f. 12 vol.—The Prior and Librarian dined [with us]:—I waited on them home.—Their garden pretty, with covered walks, but small; yet may hold many students. The Doctors of the Sorbonne are all equal;—choose those who succeed to vacancies.—Profit little.

"Wednesday, Oct. 25. I went with the Prior to St. Cloud, to see Dr. Hooke.—We walked round the palace, and had some talk.—I dined with our whole company at the monastery.—In the library, *Beroald*,—*Cymon*,—*Titus*, from

<sup>1</sup> The detestable ruffian, who afterwards conducted Louis the Sixteenth to the scaffold, and commanded the troops that guarded it, during his murder.—MALONE.



Boccace.—*Oratio Proverbialis* to the Virgin, from Petrarch; Falkland to Sandys;—Dryden's Preface to the third vol. of *Miscellanies*.<sup>1</sup>

"*Thursday*, Oct. 26. We saw the china at *Sève* cut, glazed, painted.—Bellevue, a pleasing house, not great; fine prospect.—Meudon, an old palace.—Alexander, in porphyry: hollow between eyes and nose, thin cheeks.—Plato and Aristotle—Noble terrace overlooks the town—St. Cloud.—Gallery not very high, nor grand, but pleasing.—In the rooms, Michael Angelo, drawn by himself, Sir Thomas More, Des Cartes, Bochart, Naudæus, Mazarine.—Gilded wainscot, so common that it is not minded.—Gough and Keene.—Hooke came to us at the inn.—A message from Drumgold.

"*Friday*, Oct. 27. I stayed at home.—Gough and Keene, and Mrs. S——'s friend dined with us.—This day we began to have a fire.—The weather is grown very cold, and, I fear, has a bad effect upon my breath, which has grown much more free and easy in this country.

"*Saturday*, Oct. 28. I visited the Grand Chartreux built by St. Louis.—It is built for forty, but contains only twenty-four, and will not maintain more. The friar that spoke to us had a pretty apartment.—Mr. Baretta says four rooms; I remember but three.—His books seemed to be French.—His garden was neat; he gave me grapes. We saw the Place de Victoire, with the statues of the King, and the captive nations.

"We saw the palace and gardens of Luxembourg, but the gallery was shut.—We climbed to the top stairs.—I dined with Colbrooke, who had much company:—Foote, Sir George Rodney, Motteux, Udson, Taaf.—Called on the Prior, and found him in bed.

"Hotel—a guinea a day.—Coach, three guineas a week.—Valet de place, three l. a day.—*Avant coureur*, a guinea a week.—Ordinary dinner, six l. a head.—Our ordinary seems to be about five guineas a-day.—Our extraordinary expenses, as diversions, gratuities, clothes, I cannot reckon.—Our travelling is ten guineas a day.

"White stockings, 18 l.<sup>2</sup> Wig.—Hat.

"*Sunday*, Oct. 29. We saw the boarding-school.—the *Enfans trouvés*.—A room with about eighty-six children in cradles, as sweet as a parlour.—They lose a third; take in to perhaps more than seven [years old]; put them to trades; pin to them the papers sent with them.—Want nurses.—Saw their chapel.

"Went to St. Eustatia; saw an innumerable company of girls catechised, in many bodies, perhaps 100 to a catechist.—Boys taught at one time, girls at another.—The sermon; the preacher wears a cap, which he takes off at the name:—his action uniform, not very violent.

"*Monday*, Oct. 30. We saw the library of St. Germain.—A very noble collection.—*Codex Divinorum Officiorum*, 1459:—a letter, square like that of the *Offices*, perhaps the same.—The *Codex*, by Fust and Gernsheym.—*Meursius*, 12 v. fol.—*Amadis*, in French, 3 v. fol.—CATHOLICON *sine colophone*, but of 1460.—Two other editions,<sup>3</sup> one by *Augustin. de Civitate Dei* without name, date, or place, but of Fust's square letter as it seems.

<sup>1</sup> He means, I suppose, that he read these different pieces, while he remained in the library.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> Eighteen *livres*. Two pair of white silk stockings were probably purchased.—MALONE

<sup>3</sup> I have looked in vain into De Bure, Meerman, Mattaire, and other typographical books

"I dined with Col. Drumgold; had a pleasing afternoon.

"Some of the books of St. Germain's stand in presses from the wall, like those at Oxford.

"*Tuesday, Oct. 31.* I lived at the Benedictines; meagre day: soup meagre, herrings, eels, both with sauce; fried fish; lentils, tasteless in themselves. In the library: where I found *Maître's de Historiâ Indicâ: Promontorium flectere, to double the Cape.* I parted very tenderly from the Prior and Friar Wilkes.

"*Maitre des Arts, 2 y.—Bacc. Theol. 3 y.—Licentiate, 2 y.—Doctor Th. 2 y.* in all 9 years.—For the Doctorate three disputations, *Major, Minor, Sarbonica.*—Several colleges suppressed, and transferred to that which was the Jesuits' College.

"*Wednesday, Nov. 1.* We left Paris.—St. Denis, a large town; the church not very large, but the middle aisle is very lofty and awful.—On the left are chapels built beyond the line of the wall, which destroy the symmetry of the sides. The organ is higher above the pavement than any I have ever seen.—The gates are of brass.—On the middle gate is the history of our Lord.—The painted windows are historical, and said to be eminently beautiful.—We were at another church belonging to a convent, of which the portal is a dome; we could not enter further, and it was almost dark.

"*Thursday, Nov. 2.* We came this day to Cbantilly, a seat belonging to the Prince of Condé.—This place is eminently beautified by all varieties of waters starting up in fountains, falling in cascades, running in streams, and spread in lakes.—The water seems to be too near the house.—All this water is brought from a source or river three leagues off, by an artificial canal, which for one league is carried under ground.—The house is magnificent.—The cabinet seems well stocked; what I remember was, the jaws of a hippopotamus, and a young hippopotamus preserved, which, however, is so small, that I doubt its reality.—It seems too hairy for an abortion, and too small for a mature birth.—Nothing was in spirits; all was dry.—The dog; the deer; the ant-bear with long snout.—The toucan, long broad beak.—The stables were of very great length.—The kennel had no scents.—There was a mockery of a village.—The menagerie had few animals.<sup>1</sup>—Two faussans,<sup>2</sup> or Brazilian weasels, spotted, very wild.—There is a forest, and I think, a park.—I walked till I was very weary, and next morning felt my feet battered, and with pains in the toes.

for the two editions of the "*Catholicon*," which Dr. Johnson mentions here, with names which I cannot make out, I read "one by *Latinus*, one by *Boedius*." I have deposited the original MS. in the British Museum, where the curious may see it. My grateful acknowledgments are due to Mr. Planta for the trouble he was pleased to take in aiding my researches.—BOSWELL.

<sup>1</sup> The writing is so bad here, that the names of several of the animals could not be deciphered without much more acquaintance with natural history than I possess. Dr. Blagden, with his usual politeness, most obligingly examined the MS. To that gentleman, and to Dr. Gray, of the British Museum, who also very readily assisted me, I beg leave to express my best thanks.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> It is thus written by Johnson, from the French pronunciation of *fossane*. It should be observed, that the person who showed this menagerie was mistaken in supposing the *fossane* and the Brazilian-weasel to be the same, the *fossane* being a different animal, and a native of Madagascar. I find them, however, upon one plate in Pennant's "*Synopsis of Quadrupeds*."—BOSWELL.

“*Friday, Nov. 3.* We came to Compeigne, a very large town, with a royal palace built round a pentagonal court.—The court is raised upon vaults, and has, I suppose, an entry on one side by a gentle rise.—Talk of painting.—The church is not very large, but very elegant and splendid.—I had at first great difficulty to walk, but motion grew continually easier.—At night we came to Noyon, an episcopal city.—The cathedral is very beautiful, the pillars alternately Gothic and Corinthian.—We entered a very noble parochial church.—Noyon is walled, and is said to be three miles round.

“*Saturday, Nov. 4.* We rose very early, and came through St. Quintin to Cambay, not long after three.—We went to an English nunnery, to give a letter to Father Welch, the confessor, who came to visit us in the evening.

“*Sunday, Nov. 5.* We saw the Cathedral.—It is very beautiful, with chapels on each side.—The choir splendid.—The balustrade in one part brass.—The Neff very high and grand. The altar, silver as far as it is seen.—The vestments very splendid.—At the Benedictines' Church ——”

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Here his Journal<sup>1</sup> ends abruptly. Whether he wrote any more after this time, I know not; but probably not much, as he arrived in England about the 12th of November. These short notes of his tour, though they may seem minute taken singly, make together a considerable mass of information, and exhibit such an ardour of inquiry and acuteness of examination, as, I believe, are found in but few travellers, especially at an advanced age. They completely refute the idle notion which has been propagated, *that he could not see*; and, if he had taken the trouble to revise and digest them, he undoubtedly could have expanded them into a very entertaining narrative.

<sup>1</sup> My worthy and ingenious friend, Mr. Andrew Lumsden, by his accurate acquaintance with France, enabled me to make out many proper names which Dr. Johnson had written indistinctly, and sometimes spelt erroneously.—BOSWELL.



JOHNSON AND MADAME DE BOUFFLERS.

### CHAPTER XIII—1775—1776.

JOHNSON RETURNS TO LONDON—RECAPITULATES TO BOSWELL THE CHIEF INCIDENTS OF HIS TOUR—HIS IMPRESSIONS OF SOCIETY IN FRANCE—MADAME DE BOUFFLERS' VISIT TO JOHNSON, AT HIS CHAMBERS IN THE TEMPLE.—JOHNSON'S DEFINITION OF VOLTAIRE—DR. BURNEY'S MEMORANDA—HIS LETTERS TO MRS. MONTAGU—LETTERS TO BOSWELL ON THE LAW OF ENTAIL—THE CLARENDON PRESS AND BOOKSELLERS' PROFITS.

WHEN I met him in London the following year, the account which he gave me of his French tour was, "Sir, I have seen all the visibilities of Paris, and around it; but to have formed an acquaintance with the people there, would have required more time than I could stay. I was just beginning to creep into acquaintance by means of Colonel Drumgold, a very high man, Sir, head of *L'Ecole Militaire*, a most complete character, for he had first been a professor of rhetoric, and then became a soldier. And, Sir, I was very kindly treated by the English Benedictines, and have a cell appropriated to me in their convent."

He observed, "The great in France live very magnificently, but the rest very miserably. There is no happy middle state as in England. The shops of Paris are mean; the meat in the markets is such as would be sent to a gaol in England; and Mr. Thrale justly observed, that the cookery of the French was forced upon them by necessity; for they could not eat their meat, unless they added some taste to it. The French are an indelicate people; they will spit upon any place. At Madame ——'s, a literary lady of rank, the footman took the sugar in his fingers, and threw it into my coffee. I was going to put it aside, but hearing it was made on purpose for me, I e'en tasted Tom's fingers. The same lady would needs make tea *à l'Angloise*. The spout of the tea-pot did not pour freely; she bade the footman blow into it. France is worse than Scotland in everything but climate. Nature has done more for the French; but they have done less for themselves than the Scotch have done."<sup>1</sup>

It happened that Foote was at Paris at the same time with Dr. Johnson, and his description of my friend while there was abundantly ludicrous. He told me, that the French were quite astonished at his figure and manner, and at his dress, which he obstinately continued exactly as in London;<sup>2</sup>—his brown clothes, black stockings, and plain shirt. He mentioned, that an Irish gentleman said to Johnson, "Sir, you have not seen the best French players." JOHNSON: "Players, Sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint-stools to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs."—"But, Sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?" JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir, as some dogs dance better than others."

While Johnson was in France, he was generally very resolute in speaking Latin. It was a maxim with him that a man should not let himself down, by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly. Indeed, we must have often observed how inferior, how much like a child a man appears, who speaks a broken tongue. When Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the dinners of the Royal Academy, presented him to a Frenchman of great distinction, he would not deign to speak French, but talked Latin, though his Excellency did not understand it,

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to a friend, written a few days after his return from France, he says, "The French have a clear air and a fruitful soil; but their mode of common life is gross and incommensurable, and disgusting. I am come home convinced that no improvement of general use is to be found among them."—MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Foote seems to have *embellished* a little in saying that Johnson did not alter his dress at Paris; as in his Journal is a memorandum about white stockings, wig, and hat. In another place we are told that "during his travels in France he was furnished with a French-made wig of handsome construction." That Johnson was not inattentive to his appearance is certain, from a circumstance related by Mr. Steevens, and inserted by Mr. Boswell, in vol. iv., between June 15 and June 22, 1784.—J. BLAKEWAY.

Mr. Blakeway's observation is further confirmed by a note in Johnson's diary (quoted by Sir John Hawkins, *Life of Johnson*, p. 516), by which it appears, that he laid out thirty pounds in clothes for his French journey.—MALONE.

owing, perhaps, to Johnson's English pronunciation : yet upon another occasion he was observed to speak French to a Frenchman of high rank who spoke English ; and being asked the reason, with some expression of surprise, he answered, "because I think my French is as good as his English." Though Johnson understood French perfectly, he could not speak it readily, as I have observed at his first interview with General Paoli, in 1769 ; yet he wrote it, I imagine, pretty well, as appears in some of his letters in Mrs. Piozzi's collection, of which I shall transcribe one :—

“ A MADAME LA COMTESSE DE ———

*July 16, 1775.*

“ OUI, Madame, le moment est arrivé, et il faut que je parle. Mais pourquoi faut il partir ? Est ce que je m'ennuye ? Je m'ennuyerais ailleurs. Est ce que je cherche ou quelque plaisir, ou quelque soulagement ? Je ne cherche rien, je n'espere rien. Aller voir ce que j'ai vû, être un peu rejoué, un peu degouté, me resouvenir que la vie se passe en vain, me plaindre de moi, m'endurcir aux dehors ; voici le tout de ce qu'on compte pour les delices de l'année. Que Dieu vous donne, Madame, tous les agrémens de la vie, avec un esprit qui peut en jouir sans s'y livrer trop.”

Here let me not forget a curious anecdote, as related to me by Mr. Beauclerk, which I shall endeavour to exhibit as well as I can in that gentleman's lively manner : and in justice to him it is proper to add, that Dr. Johnson told me I might rely both on the correctness of his



SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

memory, and the fidelity of his narrative. “When Madame de Boufflers was first in England,” said Beauclerk, “she was desirous to see Johnson. I accordingly went with her to his chambers in the Temple, where she was entertained with his conversation for some time. When our visit

was over, she and I left him, and were got into Inner Temple-lane, when all at once I heard a noise like thunder. This was occasioned by Johnson, who, it seems, upon a little recollection, had taken it into his head that he ought to have done the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality, and, eager to show himself a man of gallantry, was hurrying down the staircase in violent agitation. He overtook us before we reached the Temple-gate, and brushing in between me and Madame de Boufflers, seized her hand, and conducted her to her coach. His dress was a rusty-brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. A considerable crowd of people gathered round, and were not a little struck by this singular appearance."

He spoke Latin with wonderful fluency and elegance. When Père Boscovich was in England, Johnson dined in company with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's and at Dr. Douglas's, now Bishop of Salisbury. Upon both occasions, that celebrated foreigner expressed his astonishment at Johnson's Latin conversation. When at Paris, Johnson thus characterised Voltaire to Freron the Journalist: "*Ver est acerrimi ingenii et paucarum literarum.*"

" TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

" MY DEAR SIR,

*Edinburgh, Dec. 5, 1775.*

" Mr. Alexander Maclean, the young Laird of Coll, being to set out to-morrow for London, I give him this letter to introduce him to your acquaintance. The kindness which you and I experienced from his brother, whose unfortunate death we sincerely lament, will make us always desirous to show attention to any branch of the family. Indeed, you have so much of the true Highland cordiality, that I am sure you would have thought me to blame if I had neglected to recommend to you this Hebridean prince, in whose island we were hospitably entertained. I ever am with respectful attachment, my dear Sir,

Your most obliged,

" And most humble servant,

" JAMES BOSWELL."

Mr. Maclean returned with the most agreeable accounts of the polite attention with which he was received by Dr. Johnson.

In the course of this year Dr. Burney informs me that " he very frequently met Dr. Johnson at Mr. Thrale's, at Streatham, where they had many long conversations, often sitting up as long as the fire and candles lasted, and much longer than the patience of the servants subsisted."

A few of Johnson's sayings, which that gentleman recollects, shall here be inserted:—

" I never take a nap after dinner but when I have had a bad night, and then the nap takes me."

“The writer of an epitaph should not be considered as saying nothing but what is strictly true. Allowance must be made for some degree of exaggerated praise. In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath.”

“There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other.”

“More is learned in public than in private schools from emulation; there is the collision of mind with mind, or the radiation of many minds pointing to one centre. Though few boys make their own exercises, yet, if a good exercise is given up, out of a great number of boys, it is made by somebody.”

“I hate by-roads in education. Education is as well known, and has long been as well known as ever it can be. Endeavouring to make children prematurely wise is useless labour. Suppose they have more knowledge at five or six years old than other children, what use can be made of it? It will be lost before it is wanted, and the waste of so much time and labour of the teacher can never be repaid. Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed. Miss [Aikin]<sup>1</sup> was an instance of early cultivation, but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding-school, so that all her employment now is,

‘To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.’

She tells the children, ‘This is a cat, and that is a dog, with four legs and a tail; see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak.’ If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the *Congress*.”

“After having talked slightly of music, he was observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsichord, and with eagerness he called to her, ‘Why don’t you dash away like Burney?’ Dr. Burney upon this said to him, ‘I believe, Sir, we shall make a musician of you at last.’ Johnson, with candid complacency, replied, ‘Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me.’”

“He had come down one morning to the breakfast-room, and been a considerable time by himself before anybody appeared. When on a subsequent day he was twitted by Mrs. Thrale for being very late, which he generally was, he defended himself by alluding to the extraordinary morning when he had been too early. ‘Madam, I do not like to come down to *vacuity*.’”

“Dr. Burney having remarked that Mr. Garrick was beginning to look old, he said, ‘Why, Sir, you are not to wonder at that; no man’s face has had more wear and tear.’”

Not having heard from him for a longer time than I supposed he

<sup>1</sup> Miss Letitia Aikin, afterwards Mrs. Barbauld.—Ed.



would be silent, I wrote to him December 18th, not in good spirits. "Sometimes I have been afraid that the cold which has gone over Europe this year like a sort of pestilence has seized you severely; sometimes my imagination, which is upon occasions prolific of evil, hath figured that you may have somehow taken offence at some part of my conduct."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ

"DEAR SIR,

*December 23, 1775.*

"Never dream of any offence. How should you offend me? I consider your friendship as a possession, which I intend to hold till you take it from me, and to lament if ever by my fault I should lose it. However, when such suspicions find their way into your mind, always give them vent; I shall make haste to disperse them; but hinder their first ingress if you can. Consider such thoughts as morbid.

"Such illness as may excuse my omission to Lord Hailes, I cannot honestly plead. I have been hindered, I know not how, by a succession of petty obstructions. I hope to mend immediately, and to send next post to his Lordship. Mr. Thrale would have written to you if I had omitted; he sends his compliments, and wishes to see you.

"You and your lady will now have no more wrangling about feudal inheritance. How does the young Laird of Auchinleck? I suppose Miss Veronica is grown a reader and discourser.

"I have just now got a cough, but it has never yet hindered me from sleeping; I have had quieter nights than are common with me.

"I cannot but rejoice that Joseph<sup>1</sup> has had the wit to find the way back. He is a fine fellow, and one of the best travellers in the world.

"Young Coll brought me your letter. He is a very pleasing youth. I took him two days ago to the Mitre, and we dined together. I was as civil as I had the means of being.

"I have had a letter from Rasay, acknowledging, with great appearance of satisfaction, the insertion in the Edinburgh paper. I am very glad that it was done.

"My compliments to Mrs. Boswell, who does not love me; and of all the rest, I need only send them to those that do; and I am afraid it will give you very little trouble to distribute them. I am, my dear, dear Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

In 1776, Johnson wrote, so far as I can discover, nothing for the public; but that his mind was still ardent, and fraught with generous wishes to attain to still higher degrees of literary excellence, is proved by his private notes of this year, which I shall insert in their proper place.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Ritter, a Bohemian, who was in my service many years, and attended Dr. Johnson and me in our Tour to the Hebrides. After having left me for some time, he had now returned to me.—BOSWELL.

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

Jan. 10, 1776.

“ I have at last sent you all Lord Hailes's papers. While I was in France, I looked very often into Henault; but Lord Hailes, in my opinion, leaves him far and far behind. Why I did not despatch so short a perusal sooner, when I look back, I am utterly unable to discover; but human moments are stolen away by a thousand petty impediments which leave no trace behind them. I have been afflicted, through the whole Christmas, with the general disorder, of which the worst effect was a cough, which is now much mitigated, though the country, on which I look from a window at Streatham, is now covered with a deep snow. Mrs. Williams is very ill; every body else is as usual.

“ Among the papers, I found a letter to you which I think you had not opened; and a paper for ‘The Chronicle,’ which I suppose it not necessary now to insert. I return them both.

“ I have, within these few days, had the honour of receiving Lord Hailes's first volume, for which I return my most respectful thanks.

“ I wish you, my dearest friend, and your haughty lady, (for I know she does not love me,) and the young ladies, and the young Laird, all happiness. Teach the young gentleman, in spite of his mamma, to think and speak well of, Sir,

“ Your affectionate humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

At this time was in agitation a matter of great consequence to me and my family, which I should not obtrude upon the world, were it not that the part which Dr. Johnson's friendship for me made him take in it, was the occasion of an exertion of his abilities, which it would be injustice to conceal. That what he wrote upon the subject may be understood, it is necessary to give a state of the question, which I shall do as briefly as I can.

In the year 1504, the barony or manor of Auchinleck (pronounced *Ajléck*) in Ayrshire, which belonged to a family of the same name with the lands, having fallen to the Crown by forfeiture, James the Fourth, King of Scotland, granted it to Thomas Boswell, a branch of an ancient family in the county of Fife, styling him in the character “*dilecto familiari nostro* ;” and assigning, as the cause of the grant, “*pro bono et fidei servitio nobis præstito*.” Thomas Boswell was slain in battle fighting along with his sovereign, at the fatal field of Flodden, in 1513.

From this very honourable founder of our family, the estate was transmitted, in a direct series of heirs male, to David Boswell, my father's great-grand-uncle, who had no sons, but four daughters, who were all respectably married, the eldest to Lord Cathcart.

David Boswell, being resolute in the military feudal principle of continuing the male succession, passed by his daughters, and settled the estate on his nephew by his next brother, who approved of the deed, and

renounced any pretensions which he might possibly have, in preference to his son. But the estate having been burthened with large portions to the daughters, and other debts, it was necessary for the nephew to sell a considerable part of it, and what remained was still much encumbered.

The frugality of the nephew preserved, and, in some degree, relieved the estate. His son, my grandfather, an eminent lawyer, not only repurchased a great part of what had been sold, but acquired other lands; and my father, who was one of the Judges of Scotland, and had added considerably to the estate, now signified his inclination to take the privilege allowed by our law,<sup>1</sup> to secure it to his family in perpetuity, by an entail, which on account of his marriage articles, could not be done without my consent.

In the plan of entailing the estate, I heartily concurred with him, though I was the first to be restrained by it; but we unhappily differed as to the series of heirs which should be established, or in the language of our law, called to the succession. My father had declared a predilection for heirs general, that is, males and females indiscriminately. He was willing, however, that all males descending from his grandfather, should be preferred to females; but would not extend that privilege to males deriving their descent from a higher source. I, on the other hand, had a zealous partiality for heirs male, however remote, which I maintained by arguments which appeared to me to have considerable weight.<sup>2</sup> And in the particular case of our family, I apprehended that we were under an implied obligation, in honour and good faith, to transmit the estate by the same tenure which we held it, which was as heirs male,

<sup>1</sup> Acts of Parliament of Scotland, 1685, Cap. 22.—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> As first, the opinion of some distinguished naturalists, that our species is transmitted through males only, the female being all along no more than a *nidus*, or nurse as Mother Earth is to plants of every sort; which notion seems to be confirmed by that text of Scripture "He was yet *in the loins of his FATHER* when Melchisedeck met him;" (Heb. vii. 10), and consequently, that a man's grandson by a daughter, instead of being his *surest* descendant, as is vulgarly said, has, in reality, no connection whatever with his blood. And, secondly, independent of this theory, (which if true, should completely exclude heirs general), that if the preference of a male to a female, without regard to primogeniture (as a son, though much younger, nay, even a grandson by a son, to a daughter) be once admitted, as it universally is, it must be equally reasonable and proper in the most remote degree of descent from an original proprietor of an estate as in the nearest: because, however distant from the representative at the time, that remote heir male, upon the failure of those nearer to the *original proprietor* than he is, becomes in fact the nearest male to *him*, and is, therefore, preferable as *his* representative, to a female descendant. A little extension of mind will enable us easily to perceive that a son's son, in continuation to whatever length of time, is preferable to a son's daughter, in the succession to an ancient inheritance; in which regard should be had to the representation of the original proprietor, and not to that of one of his descendants.

I am aware of Blackstone's admirable demonstration of the reasonableness of the legal succession, upon the principle of there being the greatest probability that the nearest heir of the person who last dies proprietor of an estate, is of the blood of the first purchaser. But supposing a pedigree to be carefully authenticated through all its branches, instead of mere *probability* there will be a *certainty* that *the nearest heir male at whatever period*, has the same right of blood with the first heir male, namely, *the original purchaser's eldest son*.—BOSWELL.

excluding nearer females. I therefore, as I thought conscientiously, objected to my father's scheme.

My opposition was very displeasing to my father, who was entitled to great respect and deference; and I had reason to apprehend disagreeable consequences from my non-compliance with his wishes. After much perplexity and uneasiness, I wrote to Dr. Johnson, stating the case, with all its difficulties, at full length, and earnestly requesting that he would consider it at leisure, and favour me with his friendly opinion and advice.

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

*London, Jan. 15, 1776.*

“ I was much impressed by your letter, and if I can form upon your case any resolution satisfactory to myself, will very gladly impart it; but whether I am equal to it, I do not know. It is a case compounded of law and justice, and requires a mind versed in juridical disquisitions. Could not you tell your whole mind to Lord Hailes? He is, you know, both a Christian and a lawyer. I suppose he is above partiality, and above loquacity; and, I believe, he will not think the time lost in which he may quiet a disturbed, or settle a wavering mind. Write to me as any thing occurs to you; and if I find myself stopped by want of facts necessary to be known, I will make inquiries of you as my doubts arise.

“ If your former resolutions should be found only fanciful, you decide rightly in judging that your father's fancies may claim the preference; but whether they are fanciful or rational, is the question. I really think Lord Hailes could help us.

“ Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Boswell, and tell her that I hope to be wanting in nothing that I can contribute to bring you all out of your troubles.

“ I am, dear Sir, most affectionately,

“ Your humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

TO THE SAME.

“ DEAR SIR,

*Feb. 3, 1776.*

“ I am going to write upon a question which requires more knowledge of local law, and more acquaintance with the general rules of inheritance, than I can claim; but I write because you request it.

“ Land is, like any other possession, by natural right wholly in the power of its present owner: and may be sold, given, or bequeathed, absolutely or conditionally, as judgment shall direct, or passion incite.

“ But natural right would avail little without the protection of law; and the primary notion of law is restraint in the exercise of natural right. A man is therefore, in society, not fully master of what he calls his own, but he still retains all the power which law does not take from him.

In the exercise of the right which law either leaves or gives, regard is to be paid to moral obligations.

“ Of the estate which we are now considering, your father still retains such

possession, with such power over it, that he can sell it, and do with the money what he will, without any legal impediment. But when he extends his power beyond his own life, by settling the order of succession, the law makes your consent necessary.

“Let us suppose that he sells the land to risk the money in some specious adventure, and in that adventure loses the whole; his posterity would be disappointed; but they could not think themselves injured or robbed. If he spent it upon vice or pleasure, his successors could only call him vicious and voluptuous; they could not say that he was injurious or unjust.

“He that may do more may do less. He that by selling or squandering, may disinherit a whole family, may certainly disinherit part, by a partial settlement.

“Laws are formed by the manners and exigencies of particular times, and it is but accidental that they last longer than their causes; the limitation of feudal succession to the male arose from the obligation of the tenant to attend his chief in war.

“As times and opinions are always changing, I know not whether it be not usurpation to prescribe rules to posterity, by presuming to judge of what we cannot know; and I know not whether I fully approve either your design or your father's, to limit that succession which descended to you unlimited. If we are to leave *sartum tectum* to posterity, what we have without any merit of our own received from our ancestors, should not choice and free-will be kept unviolated? Is land to be treated with more reverence than liberty?—If this consideration should restrain your father from disinheriting some of the males, does it leave you the power of disinheriting all the females?

“Can the possessor of a feudal estate make any will? Can he appoint, out of the inheritance, any portions to his daughter? There seems to be a very shadowy difference between the power of leaving land, and of leaving money to be raised from land; between leaving an estate to females, and leaving the male heir, in effect, only their steward.

“Suppose at one time a law that allowed only males to inherit, and during the continuance of this law many estates to have descended, passing by the females, to remoter heirs. Suppose afterwards the law repealed in correspondence with a change of manners, and women made capable of inheritance would not then the tenure of estates be changed? Could the women have no benefit from a law made in their favour? Must they be passed by upon moral principles for ever, because they were once excluded by a legal prohibition? Or may that which passed only to males by one law, pass likewise to females by another?

“You mention your resolution to maintain the right of your brothers:<sup>1</sup> I do not see how any of their rights are invaded.

“As your whole difficulty arises from the act of your ancestor, who diverted the succession from the females, you inquire, very properly, what were his motives, and what was his intention; for you certainly are not bound by his act more than he intended to bind you, nor hold your land on harder or stricter terms than those, on which it was granted.

<sup>1</sup> Which term I applied to all the heirs male.—BOSWELL

"Intentions must be gathered from acts. When he left the estate to his nephew, by excluding his daughters, was it, or was it not, in his power to have perpetuated the succession to the males? If he could have done it, he seems to have shown, by omitting it, that he did not desire it to be done, and, upon your own principles, you will not easily prove your right to destroy that capacity of succession which your ancestors have left.

"If your ancestor had not the power of making a perpetual settlement, and if, therefore, we cannot judge distinctly of his intentions, yet his act can only be considered as an example; it makes not an obligation. And, as you observe, he set no example of rigorous adherence to the line of succession. He that overlooked a brother, would not wonder that little regard is shown to remote relations.

"As the rules of succession are, in a great part, purely legal, no man can be supposed to bequeath anything, but upon legal terms; he can grant no power which the law denies; and if he makes no special and definite limitation, he confers all the power which the law allows.

"Your ancestor, for some reason, disinherited his daughters; but it no more follows that he intended this act as a rule for posterity, than the disinheriting of his brother.

"If, therefore, you ask by what right your father admits daughters to inheritance, ask yourself, first, by what right you require them to be excluded?

"It appears, upon reflection, that your father excludes nobody; he only admits nearer females to inherit before males more remote; and the exclusion is purely consequential.

"These, dear Sir, are my thoughts, immethodical and deliberative; but, perhaps, you may find in them some glimmering of evidence.

"I cannot, however, but again recommend to you a conference with Lord Hailes, whom you know to be both a lawyer and a Christian.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, though she does not love me.

"I am, Sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I had followed his recommendation and consulted Lord Hailes, who upon this subject had a firm opinion contrary to mine. His Lordship obligingly took the trouble to write me a letter, in which he discussed with legal and historical learning, the points in which I saw much difficulty, maintaining that "the succession of heirs general was the succession, by the law of Scotland, from the throne to the cottage, as far as we can learn it by record;" observing that the estate of our family had not been limited to heirs male; and that though an heir male had in one instance been chosen in preference to nearer females, that had been an arbitrary act, which had seemed to be best in the embarrassed state of affairs at that time; and the fact was, that upon a fair computation of the value of land and money at the time, applied to the estate and the burthens upon it, there was nothing given the heir male but the skeleton of an estate. "The plea of conscience," said his Lordship, "which you

put, is a most respectable one, especially when *conscience* and *self* are on different sides. But I think that conscience is not well-informed, and that *self* and *she* ought on this occasion to be of a side."

This letter, which had considerable influence upon my mind, I sent to Dr. Johnson, begging to hear from him again, upon this interesting question.

" TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" DEAR SIR,

Feb. 9, 1776.

"Having not any acquaintance with the laws or customs of Scotland, I endeavoured to consider your question upon general principles, and found nothing of much validity that I could oppose to this position: 'He who inherits a fief unlimited by his ancestors, inherits the power of limiting it according to his own judgment or opinion.' If this be true, you may join with your father.

"Further consideration produces another conclusion: 'He who receives a fief unlimited by his ancestors, gives his heirs some reason to complain, if he does not transmit it unlimited to posterity. For why should he make the state of others worse than his own, without a reason?' If this be true, though neither you nor your father are about to do what is quite right, but as your father violates (I think) the legal succession least, he seems to be nearer the right than yourself.

"It cannot but occur that 'Women have natural and equitable claims as well as men, and these claims are not to be capriciously or lightly superseded or infringed.' When fiefs implied military service, it is easily discerned why females could not inherit them; but the reason is now at an end. As manners make laws, manners likewise repeal them.

"These are the general conclusions which I have attained. None of them are very favourable to your scheme of entail, nor perhaps to any scheme. My observation, that only he who acquires an estate may bequeath it capriciously,<sup>1</sup> if it contains any conviction, includes this position likewise, that only he who acquires an estate may entail it capriciously. But I think it may be safely presumed, that 'he who inherits an estate, inherits all the power legally concomitant;' and that 'He who gives or leaves unlimited an estate legally limitable, must be presumed to give that power of limitation which he omitted to take away, and to commit future contingencies to future prudence.' In these two positions I believe Lord Hailes will advise you to rest; every other notion of possession seems to me full of difficulties, and embarrassed with scruples.

"If these axioms be allowed, you have arrived now at full liberty without the help of particular circumstances, which, however, have in your case great weight. You very rightly observe, that he who passing by his brother gave the inheritance to his nephew, could limit no more than he gave; and by Lord Hailes's estimate of fourteen years' purchase, what he gave was no more than you may easily entail according to your own opinion, if that opinion should finally prevail.

"Lord Hailes's suspicion that entails are encroachments on the dominion of Providence, may be extended to all hereditary privileges and all permanent

<sup>1</sup> I had reminded him of his observation, mentioned *ante*.—BOSWELL.

institutions; I do not see why it may not be extended to any provision for the present hour, since all care about futurity proceeds upon a supposition, that we know at least in some degree what will be future. Of the future we certainly know nothing: but we may form conjectures from the past; and the power of forming conjectures, includes, in my opinion, the duty of acting in conformity to that probability which we discover. Providence gives the power, of which reason teaches the use.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your most faithful servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

“I hope I shall get some ground now with Mrs. Boswell; make my compliments to her, and to the little people.

“Don't burn papers: they may be safe enough in your own box,—you will wish to see them hereafter.”

TO THE SAME.

“DEAR SIR,

Feb. 15, 1776.

“To the letters which I have written about your great question, I have nothing to add. If your conscience is satisfied, you have now only your prudence to consult. I long for a letter, that I may know how this troublesome and vexatious question is at last decided.<sup>1</sup> I hope that it will at last end well. Lord Hailes's letter was very friendly, and very seasonable, but I think his aversion from entails has something in it like superstition. Providence is not counteracted by any means which Providence puts into our power. The continuance and propagation of families makes a great part of the Jewish law, and is by no means prohibited in the Christian institution, though the necessity of it continues no longer. Hereditary tenures are established in all civilised countries, and are accompanied in most with hereditary authority. Sir William Temple considers our constitution as defective, that there is not an unalienable estate in land connected with a peerage: and Lord Bacon mentions as a proof that the Turks are Barbarians, their want of *Stirpes*, as he calls them, or hereditary rank. Do not let your mind, when it is freed from the supposed necessity of a rigorous entail, be entangled with contrary objections, and think all entails unlawful, till you have cogent arguments, which I believe you never will find. I am afraid of scruples.

“I have now sent all Lord Hailes's papers; part I found hidden in a drawer in which I had laid them for security, and had forgotten them. Part of these are written twice; I have returned both the copies. Part I had read before.

“Be so kind as to return Lord Hailes my most respectful thanks for his first volume: his accuracy strikes me with wonder; his narrative is far superior to that of Henault, as I have formerly mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> The entail framed by my father with various judicious clauses, was settled by him and me, settling the estate upon the heirs male of his grandfather, which I found had been already done by my grandfather, imperfectly, but so as to be defeated only by selling the lands. I was freed by Dr. Johnson from scruples of conscientious obligation, and could, therefore, gratify my father. But my opinion and partiality for male succession in its full extent remained unshaken. Yet let me not be thought harsh or unkind to daughters; for my notion is, that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family.—BOSWELL.



"I am afraid that the trouble which my irregularity and delay has cost him, is greater, far greater, than any good that I can do him will ever recompense but if I have any more copy, I will try to do better.

"Pray let me know if Mrs. Boswell is friends with me, and pay my respects to Veronica, and Euphemia, and Alexander.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.

*Edinburgh, Feb. 20, 1776.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"You have illuminated my mind, and relieved me from imaginary shackles of conscientious obligation. Were it necessary, I could immediately join in an entail upon the series of heirs approved by my father; but it is better not to act too suddenly,"

"DR. JOHNSON TO MR. BOSWELL.

"DEAR SIR,

*Feb. 24, 1776.*

"I am glad that what I could think or say has at all contributed to quiet your thoughts. Your resolution not to act, till your opinion is confirmed by more deliberation, is very just, If you have been scrupulous, do not be rash I hope that as you think more, and take opportunities of talking with men intelligent in questions of property, you will be able to free yourself from every difficulty.

"When I wrote last, I sent, I think, ten packets. Did you receive them all?

"You must tell Mrs. Boswell that I suspected her to have written without your knowledge,<sup>1</sup> and therefore did not return any answer, lest a clandestine correspondence should have been perniciously discovered. I will write to her soon. \* \* \* \* \*

"I am, dear Sir,

"Most affectionately yours,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Having communicated to Lord Hailes what Dr. Johnson wrote concerning the question which perplexed me so much, his lordship wrote to me: "Your scruples have produced more fruit than I ever expected from them; an excellent dissertation on general principles of morals and law."

I wrote to Dr. Johnson on the 20th of February, complaining of melancholy, and expressing a strong desire to be with him; informing him that the ten packets came all safe; that Lord Hailes was much obliged to him, and said he had almost wholly removed his scruples against entails.

<sup>1</sup> A letter to him on the interesting subject of the family settlement, which I had read.—  
BOSWELL.

“ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

March 5, 1776.

“ I have not had your letter half-an-hour; as you lay so much weight upon my notions, I should think it not just to delay my answer.

“ I am very sorry that your melancholy should return, and should be sorry likewise if it could have no relief but from my company. My counsel you may have when you are pleased to require it; but of my company you cannot in the next month have much, for Mr. Thrale will take me to Italy, he says, on the 1st of April.

“ Let me warn you very earnestly against scruples. I am glad that you are reconciled to your settlement, and think it a great honour to have shaken Lord Hailes's opinion of entails. Do not, however, hope wholly to reason away your troubles; do not feed them with attention, and they will die imperceptibly away. Fix your thoughts upon your business, fill your intervals with company, and sunshine will again break in upon your mind. If you will come to me, you must come very quickly; and even then I know not but we may scour the country together, for I have a mind to see Oxford and Lichfield, before I set out on this long journey. To this I can only add that I am, dear Sir,

“ Your most affectionate humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

TO THE SAME.

“ DEAR SIR,

March 12, 1776.

“ Very early in April we leave England, and in the beginning of the next week I shall leave London for a short time; of this I think it necessary to inform you, that you may not be disappointed in any of your enterprises. I had not fully resolved to go into the country before this day.

“ Please to make my compliments to Lord Hailes; and mention very particularly to Mrs. Boswell my hope that she is reconciled to, Sir,

“ Your faithful servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

Above thirty years ago, the heirs of Lord Chancellor Clarendon presented the University of Oxford with the continuation of his History, and such other of his Lordship's manuscripts as had not been published, on condition that the profits arising from their publication should be applied to the establishment of a *Manège* in the University. The gift was accepted in full convocation. A person being now recommended to Dr. Johnson, as fit to superintend this proposed riding school, he exerted himself with that zeal for which he was remarkable upon every similar occasion. But, on inquiry into the matter, he found that the scheme was not likely to be soon carried into execution: the profits arising from the Clarendon press being, from some mismanagement, very scanty. This having been explained to him by a respectable dignitary of the church, who had good means of knowing it, he wrote a letter upon the subject, which at once exhibits his extraordinary precision and acuteness, and his warm attachment to his ALMA MATER.

“ TO THE REVEREND DR. WETHERELL, MASTER OF UNIVERSITY-COLLEGE,  
OXFORD.

“ DEAR SIR,

*March 12, 1776.*

“ Few things are more unpleasant than the transaction of business with men who are above knowing or caring what they have to do ; such as the trustees for Lord Cornbury's institution will, perhaps, appear, when you have read Dr. ———'s letter.

“ The last part of the Doctor's letter is of great importance. The complaint<sup>1</sup> which he makes I have heard long ago, and did not know but it was redressed. It is unhappy that a practice so erroneous has not been altered ; for altered it must be, or our press will be useless with all its privileges. The booksellers, who, like all other men, have strong prejudices in their own favour, are enough inclined to think the practice of printing and selling books by any but themselves, an encroachment on the rights of their fraternity ; and have need of stronger inducements to circulate academical publications than those of another ; for, of that mutual co-operation by which the general trade is carried on, the University can bear no part. Of those whom he neither loves nor fears, and from whom he expects no reciprocation of good offices, why should any man promote the interest but for profit ? I suppose, with all our scholastic ignorance of mankind, we are still too knowing to expect that the booksellers will erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning.

“ To the booksellers, if we look for either honour or profit from our press, not only their common profit, but something more must be allowed ; and if books, printed at Oxford, are expected to be rated at a high price, that price must be levied on the public, and paid by the ultimate purchaser, not by the intermediate agents. What price shall be set upon the book, is, to the booksellers, wholly indifferent, provided that they gain a proportionate profit by negotiating the sale.

“ Why books printed at Oxford should be particularly dear, I am, however, unable to find. We pay no rent ; we inherit many of our instruments and materials ; lodging and victuals are cheaper than at London ; and, therefore, workmanship ought, at least, not to be dearer. Our expenses are naturally less than those of booksellers ; and in most cases, communities are content with less profit than individuals.

“ It is, perhaps, not considered through how many hands a book often passes, before it comes into those of the reader ; or what part of the profit each hand must retain, as a motive for transmitting it to the next.

“ We will call our primary agent in London, Mr. Cadell, who receives our books from us, gives them room in his warehouse, and issues them on demand ; by him they are sold to Mr. Dilly, a wholesale bookseller, who sends them into the country ; and the last bookseller is the country bookseller. Here are three profits to be paid between the printer and the reader, or in the style of commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer ; and if any of these profits is too penuriously distributed, the process of commerce is interrupted.

<sup>1</sup> I suppose the complaint was, that the trustees of the Oxford press did not allow the London booksellers a sufficient profit upon vending their publications.—BOSWELL

"We are now come to the practical question, What is to be done? You will tell me, with reason, that I have said nothing, till I declare how much, according to my opinion, of the ultimate price ought to be distributed through the whole succession of sale.

"The deduction, I am afraid, will appear very great; but let it be considered before it is refused. We must allow, for profit, between thirty and thirty-five per cent., between six and seven shillings in the pound; that is for every book which costs the last buyer twenty shillings, we must charge Mr. Cadell with something less than fourteen. We must set the copies at fourteen shillings each, and superadd what is called the quarterly book, or for every hundred books so charged, we must deliver an hundred and four.

"The profits will then stand thus:

"Mr. Cadell, who runs no hazard, and gives no credit, will be paid for warehouse room and attendance by a shilling profit on each book, and his chance of the quarterly-book.

"Mr. Dilly, who buys the book for fifteen shillings, and who will expect the quarterly-book if he takes five-and-twenty, will send it to his country customer at sixteen and sixpence, by which, at the hazard of loss, and the certainty of long credit, he gains the regular profit of ten per cent. which is expected in the wholesale trade.

"The country bookseller, buying at sixteen and sixpence, and commonly trusting a considerable time, gains but three and sixpence; and if he trusts a year, not much more than two and sixpence; otherwise than as he may, perhaps, take as long credit as he gives.

"With less profit than this (and more you see he cannot have), the country bookseller cannot live; for his receipts are small, and his debts sometimes bad.

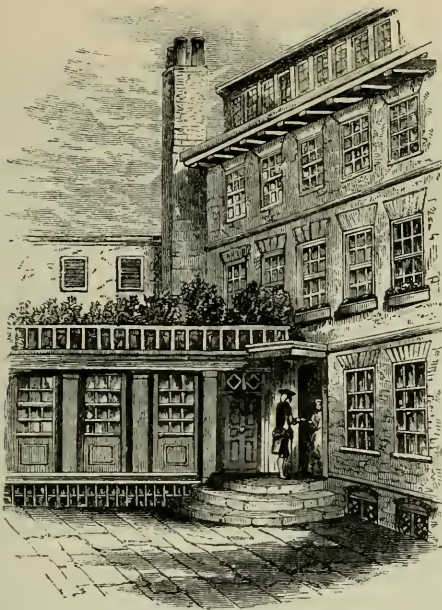
"Thus, dear Sir, I have been incited by Dr, ———'s letter to give you a detail of the circulation of books, which, perhaps, every man has not had opportunity of knowing; and which those who know it, do not, perhaps, always distinctly consider.

"I am, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am happy, in giving this full and clear statement to the public, to vindicate, by the authority of the greatest author of his age, that respectable body of men, the Booksellers of London, from vulgar reflections, as if their profits were exorbitant, when, in truth, Dr. Johnson has here allowed them more than they usually demand.—BOSWELL.

[This letter of Johnson's was extensively quoted and criticised during the disputes among the London Booksellers, in 1852, caused by some members of the retail trade selling books at less than the published price, and consequently underselling their neighbours. ED.]



JOHNSON'S HOUSE, BOLT-COURT.

## CHAPTER XIV.—1776.

BOSWELL AGAIN VISITS LONDON—BOLT COURT—LAW OF ENTAILS—ADAM SMITH'S "WEALTH OF NATIONS"—LAWYERS AND LAW-SUITS—SCOTCH MILITIA BILL—"JOHNSONIANA"—EXCURSION TO OXFORD WITH BOSWELL—ADVICE TO HYPOCHONDRIACS—DR. WETHERELL—DR. ADAMS—BISHOP HORNE—MR. THOMAS WARTON—DODSLEY—GIBBON'S "DECLINE AND FALL"—BLENHEIM—JOHNSON EXPATIATES ON THE COMFORTS OBTAINABLE AT INNS—DYER'S "FLEECE"—GRAINGER'S "SUGAR CANE"—JOHNSON AND BOSWELL ARRIVE AT BIRMINGHAM—LEGITIMATION BY SUBSEQUENT MARRIAGE—QUAKERS—MR. HECTOR—MR. BOULTON, OF SOHO—JOHNSON AND BOSWELL VISIT LICHFIELD—DR. TAYLOR, OF ASHEBOURNE.

HAVING arrived in London late on Friday, the 15th of March, I hastened next morning to wait on Dr. Johnson, at his house; but found he was removed from Johnson's-court, No. 7, to Bolt-court, No. 8, still keeping to his favourite Fleet-street. My reflection at the time upon this change, as marked in my Journal, is as follows: "I felt a foolish regret that he had left a court which bore his name;<sup>1</sup> but it was not foolish to be affected with some tenderness of regard for a place

<sup>1</sup> He said, when in Scotland, that he was *Johnson of that Ill.*—BOSWELL.

in which I had seen him a great deal, from whence I had often issued a better and a happier man than I went in, and which had often appeared to my imagination while I trod its pavement, in the solemn darkness of the night, to be sacred to wisdom and piety." Being informed that he was at Mr. Thrale's, in the Borough, I hastened thither, and found Mrs. Thrale and him at breakfast. I was kindly welcomed. In a moment he was in a full glow of conversation, and I felt myself elevated as if brought into another state of being. Mrs. Thrale and I looked to each other while he talked, and our looks expressed our congenial admiration and affection for him. I shall ever recollect this scene with great pleasure. I exclaimed to her, "I am now, intellectually, *Hermippus redivivus*, I am quite restored by him, by transfusion of *mind*." "There are many," she replied, "who admire and respect Mr. Johnson; but you and I *love* him."

He seemed very happy in the near prospect of going to Italy with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. "But," said he, "before leaving England I am to take a jaunt to Oxford, Birmingham, my native city Lichfield, and my old friend, Dr. Taylor's, at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire. I shall go in a few days, and you, Boswell, shall go with me." I was ready to accompany him, being willing even to leave London to have the pleasure of his conversation.

I mentioned with much regret the extravagance of the representative of a great family in Scotland, by which there was danger of its being ruined; and as Johnson respected it for its antiquity, he joined with me in thinking it would be happy if this person should die. Mrs. Thrale seemed shocked at this, as feudal barbarity; and said, "I do not understand this preference of the estate to its owner; of the land to the man who walks upon that land." JOHNSON: "Nay, Madam, it is not a preference of the land to its owner; it is the preference of a family to an individual. Here is an establishment in a country, which is of importance for ages, not only to the chief, but to his people; an establishment which extends upwards and downwards; that this should be destroyed by one idle fellow is a sad thing."

He said, "Entails are good, because it is good to preserve in a country a series of men, to whom the people are accustomed to look up as to their leaders. But I am for leaving a quantity of land in commerce, to excite industry, and keep money in the country; for if no land were to be bought in the country, there would be no encouragement to acquire wealth, because a family could not be founded there; or if it were acquired, it must be carried away to another country where land may be bought. And although the land in every country will remain the same, and be as fertile where there is no money, as where there is, yet all that portion of the happiness of civil life, which is produced by money circulating in a country, would be lost." BOSWELL: "Then, Sir, would it be for the advantage of a country that all its

lands were sold at once?" JOHNSON: "So far, Sir, as money produces good, it would be an advantage; for, then that country would have as much money circulating in it as it is worth. But to be sure this would be counterbalanced by disadvantages attending a total change of proprietors."

I expressed my opinion that the power of entailing should be limited thus: "That there should be one-third, or perhaps one-half of the land of a country kept free for commerce; that the proportion allowed to be entailed, should be parcelled out so that no family could entail above a certain quantity. Let a family, according to the abilities of its representatives, be richer or poorer in different generations, or always rich if its representatives be always wise; but let its absolute permanency be moderate. In this way we should be certain of there being always a number of established roots; and as in the course of nature, there is in every age an extinction of some families, there would be continual openings for men ambitious of perpetuity, to plant a stock in the entailed ground."<sup>1</sup> JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, mankind will be better able to regulate the system of entails, when the evil of too much land being locked up by them is felt, than we can do at present when it is not felt."

I mentioned Dr. Adam Smith's book on "The Wealth of Nations," which was just published, and that Sir John Pringle had observed to me, that Dr. Smith, who had never been in trade, could not be expected to write well on that subject any more than a lawyer upon physic. JOHNSON: "He is mistaken, Sir; a man who has never been engaged in trade himself may undoubtedly write well upon trade, and there is nothing which requires more to be illustrated by philosophy than trade does. As to mere wealth, that is to say, money, it is clear that one nation or one individual cannot increase its store but by making another poorer; but trade procures what is more valuable, the reciprocation of the peculiar advantages of different countries. A merchant seldom thinks but of his own particular trade. To write a good book upon it, a man must have extensive views. It is not necessary to have practised, to write well upon a subject." I mentioned law as a subject on which no man could write well without practice. JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, in England, where so much money is to be got by the practice of the law, most of our writers upon it have been in practice; though Blackstone had not been much in practice when he published his

<sup>1</sup> The privilege of perpetuating in a family an estate and arms *indefeasibly* from generation to generation, is enjoyed by none of his Majesty's subjects except in Scotland, where the legal fiction of *fine* and *recovery* is unknown. It is a privilege so proud, that I should think it would be proper to have the exercise of it dependent on the royal prerogative. It seems absurd to permit the power of perpetuating their representation, to men, who having had no eminent merit, have truly no name. The king, as the impartial father of his people, would never refuse to grant the privilege to those who deserved it.—BOSWELL.

· Commentaries.' But upon the continent, the great writers on law have not all been in practice; Grotius, indeed, was; but Puffendorff was not, Burlamaqui was not."

When we had talked of the great consequence which a man acquired by being employed in his profession, I suggested a doubt of the justice of the general opinion, that it is improper in a lawyer to solicit employment; for why, I urged, should it not be equally allowable to solicit that as a means of consequence, as it is to solicit votes to be elected a member of Parliament? Mr. Strahan had told me that a countryman of his and mine, who had risen to eminence in the law, had, when first making his way, solicited him to get him employed in city causes. JOHNSON: "Sir, it is wrong to stir up law-suits; but when once it is certain that a law-suit is to go on, there is nothing wrong in a lawyer's endeavouring that he shall have the benefit rather than another." BOSWELL: "You would not solicit employment, Sir, if you were a lawyer." JOHNSON: "No, Sir; but not because I should think it wrong, but because I should disdain it." This was a good distinction, which will be felt by men of just pride. He proceeded: "However, I would not have a lawyer to be wanting to himself in using fair means. I would have him to inject a little hint now and then, to prevent his being overlooked."

Lord Mountstuart's Bill for a Scotch Militia, in supporting which his lordship had made an able speech in the House of Commons, was now a pretty general topic of conversation. JOHNSON: "As Scotland contributes so little land-tax towards the general support of the nation, it ought not to have a militia paid out of the general fund, unless it should be thought for the general interest that Scotland should be protected from an invasion, which no man can think will happen; for what enemy would invade Scotland, where there is nothing to be got? No, Sir; now that the Scotch have not the pay of English soldiers spent among them, as so many troops are sent abroad, they are trying to get money another way, by having a militia paid. If they are afraid, and seriously desire to have an armed force to defend them, they should pay for it. Your scheme is to retain a part of your land-tax, by making us pay and clothe your militia." BOSWELL: "You should not talk of *we* and *you*, Sir; there is now an *Union*." JOHNSON: "There must be a distinction of interest, while the proportions of land-tax are so unequal. If Yorkshire should say, 'Instead of paying our land-tax, we will keep a greater number of militia,' it would be unreasonable." In this argument my friend was certainly in the wrong. The land-tax is as unequally proportioned between different parts of England, as between England and Scotland; nay, it is considerably unequal in Scotland itself. But the land-tax is but a small part of the numerous branches of public revenue, all of which Scotland pays precisely as England does. A French invasion made in Scotland would soon penetrate into England.



He thus discoursed upon supposed obligation in settling estates :— “Where a man gets the unlimited property of an estate, there is no obligation upon him in *justice* to leave it to one person rather than to another. There is a motive of preference from *kindness*, and this kindness is generally entertained for the nearest relation. If I *owe* a particular man a sum of money, I am obliged to let that man have the next money I get, and cannot in justice let another have it ; but if I owe money to no man, I may dispose of what I get as I please. There is not a *debitum justitiæ* to a man's next heir ; there is only a *debitum caritatis*. It is plain, then, that I have morally a choice according to my liking. If I have a brother in want, he has a claim from affection to my assistance ; but if I have also a brother in want, whom I like better, he has a preferable claim. The right of an heir at law is only this, that he is to have the succession to an estate, in case no other person is appointed to it by the owner. His right is merely preferable to that of the king.”

We got into a boat to cross over to Blackfriars ; and as we moved along the Thames, I talked to him of a little volume, which, altogether unknown to him, was advertised to be published in a few days, under the title of “*Johnsoniana, or Bon-Mots of Dr. Johnson.*” JOHNSON : “Sir, it is a mighty impudent thing.” BOSWELL : “Pray, Sir, could you have no redress if you were to prosecute a publisher for bringing out, under your name, what you never said, and ascribing to you, dull, stupid nonsense, or making you swear profanely as many ignorant relaters of your *bon-mots* do ?” JOHNSON : “No, Sir ; there will always be some truth mixed with the falsehood, and how can it be ascertained how much is true and how much is false ? Besides, Sir, what damages would a jury give me for having been represented as swearing ?” BOSWELL : “I think, Sir, you should at least disavow such a publication, because the world and posterity might with much plausible foundation say, ‘Here is a volume which was publicly advertised and came out in Dr. Johnson's own time, and by his silence, was admitted by him to be genuine.’” JOHNSON : “I shall give myself no trouble about the matter.”

He was, perhaps, above suffering from such spurious publications ; but I could not help thinking, that many men would be much injured in their reputation, by having absurd and vicious sayings imputed to them ; and that redress ought in such cases to be given.

He said, “The value of every story depends on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general ; if it be false, it is a picture of nothing. For instance : suppose a man should tell that Johnson, before setting out for Italy, as he had to cross the Alps, sat down to make himself wings. This many people would believe ; but it would be a picture of nothing. \* \* \* \* (naming a worthy friend of ours,) used to think a story, a story till I showed him

that truth was essential to it." I observed, that Foote entertained us with stories which were not true; but that, indeed, it was properly not as narratives that Foote's stories pleased us, but as collections of ludicrous images. JOHNSON: "Foote is quite impartial, for he tells lies of every body."

The importance of strict and scrupulous veracity cannot be too often inculcated. Johnson was known to be so rigidly attentive to it, that even in his common conversation the slightest circumstance was mentioned with exact precision. The knowledge of his having such a principle and habit made his friends have a perfect reliance on the truth of everything that he told, however it might have been doubted if told by many others. As an instance of this, I may mention an odd incident which he related as having happened to him one night in Fleet-street: "A gentlewoman," said he, "begged I would give her my arm to assist her in crossing the street, which I accordingly did; upon which she offered me a shilling, supposing me to be the watchman. I perceived that she was somewhat in liquor." This, if told by most people, would have been thought an invention; when told by Johnson, it was believed by his friends as much as if they had seen what passed.

We landed at the Temple-stairs, where we parted.

I found him in the evening in Mrs. Williams's room. We talked of religious orders. He said, "It is as unreasonable for a man to go into a Carthusian convent for fear of being immoral, as for a man to cut off his hands for fear he should steal. There is, indeed, great resolution in the immediate act of dismembering himself; but when that is once done, he has no longer any merit: for though it is out of his power to steal, yet he may all his life be a thief in his heart. So when a man has once become a Carthusian, he is obliged to continue so, whether he chooses it or not. Their silence, too, is absurd. We read in the Gospel of the apostles being sent to preach, but not to hold their tongues. All severity that does not tend to increase good or prevent evil, is idle. I said to the Lady Abbess of a convent, 'Madam, you are here, not for the love of virtue, but the fear of vice.' She said, 'she should remember this as long as she lived.'" I thought it hard to give her this view of her situation, when she could not help it; and, indeed, I wondered at the whole of what he now said; because, both in his "Rambler" and "Idler," he treats religious austerities with much solemnity of respect.

Finding him still persevering in his abstinence from wine, I ventured to speak to him of it. JOHNSON: "Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine, if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore, after having been for some time without it, on account of illness, I thought it better not to return to it. Every man is to judge for himself, according to the effects which he experiences. One of the Fathers tells us, he found fasting made him so peevish that he did not practise it."

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess in wine. One of his friends, I well remember, came to sup at a tavern with him and some other gentlemen, and too plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner. When one who loved mischief, thinking to produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, a few days afterwards, "Well, Sir, what did your friend say to you, as an apology for being in such a situation?" Johnson answered: "Sir, he said all that a man *should* say: he said he was sorry for it."

I heard him once give a very judicious practical advice upon this subject: "A man who has been drinking wine at all freely, should never go into a new company. With those who have partaken of wine with him he may be pretty well in unison; but he will probably be offensive or appear ridiculous to other people."

He allowed very great influence to education. "I do not deny, Sir, but there is some original difference in minds; but it is nothing in comparison of what is formed by education. We may instance the science of *numbers*, which all minds are equally capable of attaining; yet we find a prodigious difference in the powers of different men, in that respect, after they are grown up, because their minds have been more or less exercised in it; and I think the same cause will explain the difference of excellence in other things, gradations admitting always some difference in the first principles."

This is a difficult subject; but it is best to hope that diligence may do a great deal. We are *sure* of what it can do, in increasing our mechanical force and dexterity.

I again visited him on Monday. He took occasion to enlarge, as he often did, upon the wretchedness of a sea-life. "A ship is worse than a gaol. There is, in a gaol, better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land."—"Then," said I, "it would be cruel in a father to breed his son to the sea." JOHNSON: "It would be cruel in a father who thinks as I do. Men go to sea before they know the unhappiness of that way of life; and when they have come to know it, they cannot escape from it, because it is then too late to choose another profession; as, indeed, is generally the case with men, when they have once engaged in any particular way of life."

On Tuesday, March 19, which was fixed for our proposed jaunt, we met at the Somerset Coffee-house in the Strand, where we were taken up by the Oxford coach. He was accompanied by Mr. Gwyn, the architect; and a gentleman of Merton College, whom he did not know, had the fourth seat. We soon got into conversation; for it was very remarkable of Johnson, that the presence of a stranger had no restraint upon his talk. I observed that Garrick, who was about to quit the

stage, would soon have an easier life. JOHNSON : " I doubt that, Sir." BOSWELL : " Why, Sir, he will be Atlas with the burden off his back." JOHNSON : " But I know not if he will be so steady without his load. However, he should never play any more, but be entirely the gentleman, and not partly the player ; he should no longer subject himself to be hissed by a mob, or to be insolently treated by performers, whom he used to rule with a high hand, and who would gladly retaliate." BOSWELL : " I think he should play once a year for the benefit of decayed actors, as it has been said he means to do." JOHNSON : " Alas, Sir, he will soon be a decayed actor himself."

Johnson expressed his disapprobation of ornamental architecture, such as magnificent columns supporting a portico, or expensive pilasters supporting merely their own capitals, " because it consumes labour disproportionate to its utility." For the same reason he satirized statuary. " Painting," said he, " consumes labour not disproportionate to its effect : but a fellow will hack half a year at a block of marble to make something in stone that hardly resembles a man. The value of statuary is owing to its difficulty. You would not value the finest head cut upon a carrot." Here he seemed to me to be strangely deficient in taste ; for surely statuary is a noble art of imitation, and preserves a wonderful expression of the varieties of the human frame ; and although it must be allowed that the circumstances of difficulty enhance the value of a marble head, we should consider that, if it requires a long time in the performance, it has a proportionate value in durability.

Gwyn was a fine lively rattling fellow. Dr. Johnson kept him in subjection, but with a kindly authority. The spirit of the artist, however, rose against what he thought a Gothic attack, and he made a brisk defence. " What, Sir, you will allow no value to beauty in architecture or in statuary ! Why should we allow it then in writing ? Why do you take the trouble to give us so many fine allusions, and bright images, and elegant phrases ? You might convey all your instruction without these ornaments." Johnson smiled with complacency ; but said, " Why, Sir, all these ornaments are useful, because they obtain an easier reception for truth ; but a building is not at all more convenient for being decorated with superfluous carved work."

Gwyn at last was lucky enough to make one reply to Dr. Johnson which he allowed to be excellent. Johnson censured him for taking down a church which might have stood many years, and building a new one at a different place, for no other reason, but that there might be a direct road to a new bridge ; and his expression was, " You are taking a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight line to the bridge." " No, Sir," said Gwyn, " I am putting the church *in* the way, that the people may not *go out of the way*." JOHNSON (with a hearty loud laugh of approbation) : " Speak no more. Rest your colloquial fame upon this."

Upon our arrival at Oxford, Dr. Johnson and I went directly to University College, but were disappointed on finding that one of the fellows, his friend Mr. Scott, who accompanied him from Newcastle to Edinburgh, was gone to the country. We put up at the Angel Inn, and passed the evening by ourselves in easy and familiar conversation. Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed, "A man so afflicted, Sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them." BOSWELL: "May not he think them down, Sir?" JOHNSON: "No, Sir. To attempt to *think them down* is madness. He should have a lamp constantly burning in his bed-chamber during the night, and if wakefully disturbed, take a book and read, and compose himself to rest. To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise." BOSWELL: "Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course of chemistry?" JOHNSON: "Let him take a course of chemistry, or a course of ropedancing, or a course of anything to which he is inclined at the time. Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself. Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy' is a valuable work. It is, perhaps, overloaded with quotation. But there is a great spirit and great power in what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind."

Next morning we visited Dr. Wetherell, Master of University College, with whom Dr. Johnson conferred on the most advantageous mode of disposing of the books printed at the Clarendon press, on which subject his letter has been inserted in a former page. I often had occasion to remark, Johnson loved business, loved to have his wisdom actually operate on real life. Dr. Wetherell and I talked of him without reserve in his own presence. WETHERELL: "I would have given him a hundred guineas if he would have written a Preface to his 'Political Tracts,' by way of a Discourse on the British Constitution." BOSWELL: "Dr. Johnson, though in his writings, and upon all occasions, a great friend to the constitution, both in church and state, has never written expressly in support of either. There is really a claim upon him for both. I am sure he could give a volume of no great bulk upon each which would comprise all the substance, and with his spirit would effectually maintain them. He should erect a fort on the confines of each." I could perceive that he was displeased with this dialogue. He burst out, "Why should I be always writing?" I hoped he was conscious that the debt was just, and meant to discharge it, though he disliked being dunned.

We then went to Pembroke College, and waited on his old friend Dr. Adams, the master of it, whom I found to be a most polite, pleasing, communicative man. Before his advancement to the headship of his college, I had intended to go and visit him at Shrewsbury, where he was rector of St. Chad's, in order to get from him what particulars he could

recollect of Johnson's academical life. He now obligingly gave me part of that authentic information, which, with what I afterwards owed to his kindness, will be found incorporated in its proper place in this work.

Dr. Adams had distinguished himself by an able answer to David Hume's "Essay on Miracles." He told me he had once dined in company with Hume, in London; that Hume shook hands with him, and said, "You have treated me much better than I deserve;" and that they exchanged visits. I took the liberty to object to treating an infidel writer with smooth civility. Where there is a controversy concerning a passage in a classic author, or concerning a question in antiquities, or any other subject in which human happiness is not deeply interested, a man may treat his antagonist with politeness and even respect. But where the controversy is concerning the truth of religion, it is of such vast importance to him who maintains it, to obtain the victory, that the person of an opponent ought not to be spared. If a man firmly believes that religion is an invaluable treasure, he will consider a writer who endeavours to deprive mankind of it as a *robber*; he will look upon him as *odious*, though the infidel might think himself in the right. A robber who reasons as the gang do in the "Beggars' Opera," who call themselves *practical* philosophers, and may have as much sincerity as pernicious *speculative* philosophers, is not the less an object of just indignation. An abandoned profligate may think that it is not wrong to debauch my wife; but shall I, therefore, not detest him? And if I catch him in making an attempt, shall I treat him with politeness? No, I will kick him down stairs, or run him through the body; that is, if I really love my wife, or have a true rational notion of honour. An infidel then shall not be treated handsomely by a Christian, merely because he endeavours to rob with ingenuity. I do declare, however, that I am exceedingly unwilling to be provoked to anger, and could I be persuaded that truth would not suffer from a cool moderation in its defenders, I should wish to preserve good humour, at least, in every controversy; nor, indeed, do I see why a man should lose his temper while he does all he can to refute an opponent. I think ridicule may be fairly used against an infidel; for instance, if he be an ugly fellow, and yet absurdly vain of his person, we may contrast his appearance with Cicero's beautiful image of Virtue, could she be seen. Johnson coincided with me, and said, "When a man voluntarily engages in an important controversy, he is to do all he can to lessen his antagonist, because authority from personal respect has much weight with most people, and often more than reasoning. If my antagonist writes bad language, though that may not be essential to the question, I will attack him for his bad language." ADAMS: "You would not jostle a chimney-sweeper." JOHNSON: "Yes, Sir, if it were necessary to jostle him *down*."

Dr. Adams told us, that in some of the colleges at Oxford, the fellows had excluded the students from social intercourse with them in

the common room. JOHNSON : "They are in the right, Sir ; there can be no real conversation, no fair exertion of mind amongst them, if the young men are by : for a man who has a character does not choose to stake it in their presence." BOSWELL : "But, Sir, may there not be very good conversation without a contest for superiority?" JOHNSON : "No animated conversation, Sir ; for it cannot be but one or other will come off superior. I do not mean that the victor must have the better of the argument, for he may take the weak side ; but his superiority of parts and knowledge will necessarily appear ; and he to whom he thus shows himself superior is lessened in the eyes of the young men. You know it was said, '*Mallet cum Scaligero errare quam cum Clavio recte sapere.*' In the same manner take Bentley's and Jason de Nores' Comments upon Horace, you will admire Bentley more when wrong, than Jason when right.

We walked with Dr. Adams into the master's garden, and into the common room. JOHNSON (after a reverie of meditation) : "Ay ! Here I used to play at draughts with Phil. Jones and Fludyer. Jones loved beer, and did not get very forward in the Church. Fludyer turned out a scoundrel, a Whig, and said he was ashamed of having been bred at Oxford. He had a living at Putney, and got under the eye of some retainers to the court at that time, and so became a violent Whig : but he had been a scoundrel all along to be sure." BOSWELL : "Was he a scoundrel, Sir, in any other way than that of being a political scoundrel ? Did he cheat at draughts?" JOHNSON : "Sir, we never played for *money.*"

He then carried me to visit Dr. Bentham, Canon of Christ Church, and divinity professor, with whose learned and lively conversation we were much pleased. He gave us an invitation to dinner, which Dr. Johnson told me was a high honour. "Sir, it is a great thing to dine with the canons of Christ Church." We could not accept his invitation, as we were engaged to dine at University College. We had an excellent dinner there, with the masters and fellows, it being St. Cuthbert's day, which is kept by them as a festival, as he was a saint of Durham, with which this college is much connected.

We drank tea with Dr. Horne, late President of Magdalen College, and Bishop of Norwich, of whose abilities, in different respects, the public has had eminent proofs, and the esteem annexed to whose character was increased by knowing him personally. He had talked of



DR. HORNE, BISHOP OF NORWICH.

publishing an edition of Walton's Lives, but had laid aside that design, upon Dr. Johnson's telling him, from mistake, that Lord Hailes intended to do it. I had wished to negotiate between Lord Hailes and him, that one or other should perform so good a work. JOHNSON: "In order to do it well, it would be necessary to collect all the editions of Walton's Lives. By way of adapting the book to the taste of the present age, they have, in a late edition, left out a vision which he relates Dr. Donne had, but it should be restored;<sup>1</sup> and there should be a critical catalogue given of the works of the different persons whose lives were written by Walton, and therefore their works must be carefully read by the editor."

We then went to Trinity College, where he introduced me to Mr. Thomas Warton, with whom we passed a part of the evening. We talked of biography. JOHNSON: "It is rarely well executed. They only, who live with a man, can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination; and few people who have lived with a man know what to remark about him. The chaplain of a late bishop, whom I was to assist in writing some memoirs of his lordship, could tell me scarcely anything."<sup>2</sup>

I said, Mr. Robert Dodsley's life should be written, as he had been so much connected with the wits of his time, and by his literary merit had raised himself from the station of a footman. Mr. Warton said, he had published a little volume under the title of "The Muse in Livery." JOHNSON: "I doubt whether Dodsley's brother would thank a man who should write his life; yet Dodsley himself was not unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected. When Lord Lyttelton's 'Dialogues of the Dead' came out, one of which is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Dartineuf, a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me, 'I knew Dartineuf well, for I was once his footman.'"

Biography led us to speak of Dr. John Campbell, who had written a considerable part of "The Biographia Britannica." Johnson, though he valued him highly, was of opinion that there was not so much in his great work, "A Political Survey of Great Britain," as the world had been taught to expect;<sup>3</sup> and had said to me, that he believed Campbell's disappointment on account of the bad success of that work, had killed

<sup>1</sup> The vision which Johnson speaks of, was not in the original publication of Walton's Life of Dr. Donne, in 1640. It is not found in the three earliest editions; but was first introduced into the fourth, in 1675. I have not been able to discover what modern republication is alluded to, in which it was omitted. It has very properly been restored by Dr. Zouch.—JAMES BOSWELL, JUN.

<sup>2</sup> It has been mentioned to me by an accurate English friend, that Dr. Johnson could never have used the phrase *almost nothing*, as not being English; and therefore I have put another in its place. At the same time, I am not quite convinced it is not good English. For the best writers use this phrase, "*little or nothing*;" i. e. almost so little as to be nothing.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> Yet surely it is a very useful work, and of wonderful research and labour for one man to have executed.—BOSWELL



him. He this evening observed of it, "That work was his death." Mr. Warton, not adverting to his meaning, answered, "I believe so; from the great attention he bestowed on it." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, he died of *want* of attention, if he died at all by that book."

We talked of a work much in vogue at that time, written in a very mellifluous style, but which, under pretext of another subject, contained much artful infidelity. I said it was not fair to attack us unexpectedly; he should have warned us of our danger before we entered his garden of flowery eloquence, by advertising, "Spring-guns and men-traps set here." The author<sup>1</sup> had been an Oxonian, and was remembered there for having "turned Papist." I observed, that as he had changed several times—from the Church of England to the Church of Rome, from the Church of Rome to infidelity—I did not despair yet of seeing him a Methodist preacher. JOHNSON (laughing): "It is said that his range has been more extensive, and that he has once been Mahometan. However, now that he has published his infidelity, he will probably persist in it." BOSWELL: "I am not quite sure of that, Sir."

I mentioned Sir Richard Steele having published his "Christian Hero," with the avowed purpose of obliging himself to lead a religious life; yet that his conduct was by no means strictly suitable. JOHNSON: "Steele, I believe, practised the lighter vices."

Mr. Warton, being engaged, could not sup with us at our inn; we had therefore another evening by ourselves. I asked Johnson whether a man's being forward to make himself known to eminent people, and seeing as much of life, and getting as much information as he could in every way, was not yet lessening himself by his forwardness? JOHNSON: "No, Sir; a man always makes himself greater as he increases his knowledge."

I censured some ludicrous fantastic dialogues between two coach-horses, and other such stuff, which Baretta had lately published. He joined with me, and said, "Nothing odd will do long. 'Tristram Shandy' did not last." I expressed a desire to be acquainted with a lady who had been much talked of, and universally celebrated for extraordinary address and insinuation. JOHNSON: "Never believe extraordinary characters which you hear of people. Depend upon it, Sir, they are exaggerated. You do not see one man shoot a great deal higher than another." I mentioned Mr. Burke. JOHNSON: "Yes, Burke is an extraordinary man. His stream of mind is perpetual." It is very pleasing to me to record, that Johnson's high estimation of the talents of this gentleman was uniform, from their early acquaintance. Sir Joshua Reynolds informs me, that when Mr. Burke was first elected a member of Parliament, and Sir J. Hawkins expressed a wonder at his attaining a seat, Johnson said: "Now, we who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country." And once

when Johnson was ill, and unable to exert himself as much as usual without fatigue, Mr. Burke having been mentioned, he said, "That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me." So much was he accustomed to consider conversation as a contest, and such was his notion of Burke as an opponent.

Next morning, Thursday, March 21, we set out in a post-chaise to pursue our ramble. It was a delightful day, and we rode through Blenheim-park. When I looked at the magnificent bridge built by John, Duke of Marlborough, over a small rivulet, and recollected the epigram made upon it—

"The lofty arch his high ambition shows ;  
The stream an emblem of his bounty flows :"

and saw that now, by the genius of Brown, a magnificent body of water was collected, I said, "They have *drowned* the epigram." I observed to him, while in the midst of the noble scene around us, "You and I, Sir, have, I think, seen together the extremes of what can be seen in Britain—the wild, rough island of Mull, and Blenheim-park."

We dined at an excellent inn at Chapel-house, where he expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life. "There is no private house," said he, "in which people can enjoy themselves so well as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody should be easy, in the nature of things it cannot be : there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests—the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him ; and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome ; and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, Sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn." <sup>1</sup> He then repeated, with great emotion, Shestone's lines :

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Hawkins has preserved very few *Memorabilia* of Johnson. There is, however to be found in his bulky tome, a very excellent one upon this subject. "In contradiction to those, who, having a wife and children, prefer domestic enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, *that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity.*—<sup>1</sup> As soon, said he, 'as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude : when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious to my call ; anxious to know and ready to supply my wants ; wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love ; I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion and sentiments I find delight.'"—BOSWELL.

“Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,  
Where'er his stages may have been,  
May sigh to think he still has found  
The warmest welcome at an inn.”<sup>1</sup>

My illustrious friend, I thought, did not sufficiently admire Shenstone. That ingenious and elegant gentleman's opinion of Johnson appears in one of his letters to Mr. Greaves, dated Feb. 9, 1760. “I have lately been reading one or two volumes of the Rambler; who, excepting against some few hardnesses<sup>2</sup> in his manner, and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the most nervous, most perspicuous, most concise, most harmonious prose writers I know. A learned diction improves by time.”

In the afternoon, as we were driven rapidly along in the post-chaise, he said to me, “Life has not many things better than this.”

We stopped at Stratford-upon-Avon, and drank tea and coffee; and it pleased me to be with him upon the classic ground of Shakspeare's native place.

He spoke slightly of Dyer's “Fleece.”—“The subject, Sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of serges and druggets? Yet you will hear many people talk to you gravely of that excellent poem, ‘The Fleece.’” Having talked of Grainger's “Sugar Cane,” I mentioned to him Mr. Langton's having told me, that this poem, when read in manuscript at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, had made all the assembled wits burst into a laugh, when, after much blank-verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph thus:—

“Now, Muse, let's sing of rats.”

And what increased the ridicule was, that one of the company, who slyly overlooked the reader, perceived that the word had been originally *mice*, and had been altered to *rats*, as more dignified.<sup>3</sup>

This passage does not appear in the printed work, Dr. Grainger, or some of his friends, it should seem, having become sensible that introducing even *rats*, in a grave poem, might be liable to banter. He, however, could not bring himself to relinquish the idea; for they are

<sup>1</sup> We happened to lie this night at the inn at Henley, where Shenstone wrote these lines. I give them as they are found in the corrected edition of his works, published after his death. In Dodsley's collection the stanza ran thus:—

“Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,  
Whate'er his various tour has been,  
May sigh to think how oft he found  
His warmest welcome at an inn.”—BOSWELL.

<sup>2</sup> He too often makes use of the abstract for the concrete.—BOSWELL.

<sup>3</sup> Such is this little laughable incident, which has been often related. Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who was an intimate friend of Dr. Grainger, and has a particular regard for his memory, has communicated to me the following explanation:—

“The passage in question was originally not liable to such perversion; for the author having occasion in that part of his work to mention the hayoc made by rats and mice, had introduced the subject in a kind of mock heroic, and a parody of Homer's battle of the frogs

thus, in a still more ludicrous manner, periphrastically exhibited in his poem as it now stands :—

“Nor with less waste the whisker'd vermin race,  
A countless clan, despoil the lowland cane.”

Johnson said that Dr. Grainger was an agreeable man ; a man who would do any good that was in his power. His translation of Tibullus, he thought, was very well done ; but “The Sugar-Cane, a Poem,”<sup>1</sup> did not please him ; for he exclaimed, “What could be made of a sugar-cane ? One might as well write ‘The Parsley-Bed, a Poem ;’ or ‘The Cabbage Garden, a Poem.’” BOSWELL : “You must then *pickle* your cabbage with the *sal atticum*.” JOHNSON : “You know there is already ‘The Hop-Garden, a Poem ;’ and, I think, one could say a great deal about cabbage. The poem might begin with the advantages of civilised society over a rude state, exemplified by the Scotch, who had no cabbages till Oliver Cromwell’s soldiers introduced them ; and one might thus show how arts are propagated by conquest, as they were by the Roman arms.” He seemed to be much diverted with the fertility of his own fancy.

I told him, that I heard Dr. Percy was writing the history of the wolf in Great Britain. JOHNSON : “The wolf, Sir ! why the wölf ? Why does he not write of the bear, which we had formerly ? Nay, it is said we had the beaver. Or why does he not write of the grey rat, the Hanover rat, as it is called, because it is said to have come into this country about the time that the family of Hanover came ? I should like to see ‘*The History of the Grey Rat, by Thomas Percy, D.D., Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty,*’” (laughing immoderately). BOSWELL : “I am afraid a court chaplain could not decently write of the grey rat.” JOHNSON : “Sir, he need not give it the name of the Hanover rat.” Thus could he indulge a luxuriant, sportive imagination, when talking of a friend whom he loved and esteemed.

He mentioned to me the singular history of an ingenious acquaintance : “He had practised physic in various situations with no great emolument. A West India gentleman, whom he delighted by his conversation, gave him a bond for a handsome annuity during his life, on the condition of

and mice, invoking the Muse of the old Grecian bard in an elegant and well-turned manner. In that state I had seen it ; but afterwards, unknown to me and other friends, he had been persuaded, contrary to his own better judgment, to alter it, so as to produce the unlucky effect above mentioned.”

The above was written by the Bishop when he had not the poem itself to recur to ; and though the account given was true of it at one period, yet as Dr. Grainger afterwards altered the passage in question, the remarks in the text do not now apply to the printed poem.

The Bishop gives this character of Dr. Grainger :—“He was not only a man of genius and learning, but had many excellent virtues ; being one of the most generous, friendly, and benevolent men I ever knew.”—BOSWELL.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson said to me, “Percy, Sir, was angry with me for laughing at the ‘Sugar-cane ;’ for he had a mind to make a great thing of Grainger’s rats.—BOSWELL.

his accompanying him into the West Indies, and living with him there for two years. He accordingly embarked with the gentleman; but upon the voyage fell in love with a young woman who happened to be one of the passengers, and married the wench. From the imprudence of his disposition he quarrelled with the gentleman, and declared he would have no connection with him. So he forfeited the annuity. He settled as a physician in one of the Leeward Islands. A man was sent out to him merely to compound his medicines. This fellow set up as rival to him in his practice of physic, and got so much the better of him in the opinion of the people of the island, that he carried away all the business, upon which he returned to England, and soon after died."

On Friday, March 22, having set out early from Henley, where we had lain the preceding night, we arrived at Birmingham about nine o'clock, and, after breakfast, went to call on his old schoolfellow, Mr. Hector. A very stupid maid, who opened the door, told us that "her master was gone out; he was gone to the country; she could not tell when he would return." In short, she gave us a miserable reception; and Johnson observed, "She would have behaved no better to people who wanted him in the way of his profession." He said to her, "My name is Johnson; tell him I called. Will you remember the name?" She answered with rustic simplicity, in the Warwickshire pronunciation, "I don't understand you, Sir." "Blockhead!" said he, "I'll write." I never heard the word *blockhead* applied to a woman before, though I do not see why it should not, when there is evident occasion for it.<sup>1</sup> He however, made another attempt to make her understand him, and roared loud in her ear, "*Johnson,*" and then she caught the sound.

We next called on Mr. Lloyd, one of the people called Quakers. He too was not at home, but Mrs. Lloyd was, and received us courteously, and asked us to dinner. JOHNSON said to me, "After the uncertainty of all human things at Hector's, this invitation came very well." We walked about the town, and he was pleased to see it increasing.

I talked of legitimation by subsequent marriage, which obtained in the Roman law, and still obtains in the law of Scotland. JOHNSON: "I think it a bad thing; because the chastity of women being of the utmost importance, as all property depends upon it, they who forfeit it should not have any possibility of being restored to good character; nor should the children by illicit connection attain the full right of lawful children, by the posterior consent of the offending parties." His opinion upon this subject deserves consideration. Upon his principle there may

<sup>1</sup> My worthy friend Mr. Langton, to whom I am under innumerable obligations in the course of my Johnsonian History, has furnished me with a droll illustration of this question. An honest carpenter, after giving some anecdote, in his presence, of the ill-treatment which he had received from a clergyman's wife, who was a noted termagant, and whom he accused of unjust dealing in some transaction with him, added, "I took care to let her know what I thought of her." And being asked, "What did you say?" answered, "I told her she was a scoundrel."—BOSWELL.

at times, be a hardship, and seemingly a strange one, upon individuals; but the general good of society is better secured. And, after all, it is unreasonable in an individual to repine that he has not the advantage of a state which is made different from his own by the social institution under which he is born. A woman does not complain that her brother who is younger than her, gets their common father's estate. Why, then, should a natural son complain that a younger brother, by the same parents lawfully begotten, gets it? The operation of law is similar in both cases. Besides, an illegitimate son, who has a younger legitimate brother by the same father and mother, has no stronger claim to the father's estate, than if that legitimate brother had only the same father, from whom alone the estate descends.

Mr. Lloyd joined us in the street, and in a little while we met *Friend Hector*, as Mr. Lloyd called him. It gave me pleasure to observe

the joy which Johnson and he expressed on seeing each other again. Mr. Lloyd and I left them together, while he obligingly showed me some of the manufactures of this very curious assemblage of artificers. We all met at dinner at Mr. Lloyd's, where we were entertained with great hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd had been married the same year with their Majesties, and like them, had been blessed with a numerous family of fine children, their numbers being exactly the same. Johnson said, "Marriage is the best state for a man in general; and every man is a worse man in proportion as he is unfit for the married state."



MR. HECTOR.

I have always loved the simplicity of manners, and the spiritual-mindedness of the Quakers and, talking with Mr. Lloyd, I observed that the essential part of religion was piety—a devout intercourse with the Divinity, and that many a man was a Quaker without knowing it.

As Dr. Johnson had said to me in the morning, while we walked together, that he liked individuals among the Quakers, but not the sect, when we were at Mr. Lloyd's I kept clear of introducing any questions concerning the peculiarities of their faith. But I having asked to look at Baskerville's edition of "Barclay's Apology," Johnson laid hold of it; and the chapter on baptism happening to open, Johnson remarked, "He says there is neither precept nor practice for baptism in the scriptures. That is false." Here he was the aggressor, by no means in a gentle manner: and the good Quakers had the advantage of him, for he had read negligently, and had not observed that

Barclay speaks of *infant* baptism, which they calmly made him perceive. Mr. Lloyd, however, was in a great mistake ; for, when insisting that the rite of baptism by water was to cease when the *spiritual* administration of Christ began, he maintained that John the Baptist said, "*My baptism shall decrease, but his shall increase.*" Whereas the words are, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*"<sup>1</sup>

One of them having objected to the "observance of days, and months, and years," Johnson answered, "The Church does not superstitiously observe days merely as days, but as memorials of important facts. Christmas might be kept as well upon one day of the year as another ; but there should be a stated day for commemorating the birth of our Saviour, because there is danger that what may be done on any day will be neglected."

He said to me at another time, "Sir, the holidays observed by our Church are of great use in our religion." There can be no doubt of this in a limited sense—I mean if the number of such consecrated portions of time be not too extensive. The excellent Mr. Nelson's "Festivals and Fasts," which has, I understand, the greatest sale of any book ever printed in England—except the Bible—is a most valuable help to devotion ; and in addition to it I would recommend two sermons on the same subject by Mr. Pott, Archdeacon of St. Alban's, equally distinguished for piety and elegance. I am sorry to have it to say that Scotland is the only Christian country, Catholic or Protestant, where the great events of our religion are not solemnly commemorated by its ecclesiastical establishment on days set apart for the purpose.

Mr. Hector was so good as to accompany me to see the great works of Mr. Boulton, at a place which he has called Soho, about two miles from Birmingham, which the very ingenious proprietor showed me himself to the best advantage. I wished Johnson had been with us ; for it was a scene which I should have been glad to contemplate by his light. The vastness and the contrivance of some of the machinery would have "matched his mighty mind." I shall never forget Mr. Boulton's expression to me, "I sell here, Sir, what all the world desires to have—POWER." He had about seven hundred people at work. I contemplated him as an *iron chieftain*, and he seemed to be a father to his tribe. One of them came to him, complaining grievously of his landlord for having distrained his goods. "Your landlord is in the right, Smith," said Boulton. "But I'll tell you what—find you a friend who will lay down one half of your rent, and I'll lay down the other half, and you shall have your goods again."

From Mr. Hector I now learnt many particulars of Dr. Johnson's early life, which, with others that he gave me at different times since, have contributed to the formation of this work.

Dr. Johnson said to me in the morning, "You will see, Sir, at Mr. Hector's, his sister, Mrs. Careless, a clergyman's widow. She was the first woman with whom I was in love. It dropt out of my head imperceptibly; but she and I shall always have a kindness for each other." He laughed at the notion that a man can never be really in love but once, and considered it as a mere romantic fancy.

On our return from Mr. Boulton's, Mr. Hector took me to his house, where we found Johnson sitting placidly at tea, with his *first love*; who though now advanced in years, was a genteel woman, very agreeable and well bred.

Johnson lamented to Mr. Hector the state of one of their school-fellows, Mr. Charles Congreve, a clergyman, which he thus described: "He obtained, I believe, considerable preferment in Ireland, but now lives in London, quite as a valetudinarian, afraid to go into any house but his own. He takes a short airing in his post-chaise every day. He has an elderly woman, whom he calls cousin, who lives with him, and jogs his elbow when his glass has stood too long empty, and encourages him in drinking, in which he is very willing to be encouraged: not that he gets drunk, for he is a very pious man, but he is always muddy. He confesses to one bottle of port every day, and he probably drinks more. He is quite unsocial; his conversation is quite monosyllabical; and when, at my last visit, I asked him what o'clock it was, that signal of my departure had so pleasing an effect on him, that he sprung up to look at his watch, like a greyhound bounding at a hare." When Johnson took leave of Mr. Hector, he said, "Don't grow like Congreve; nor let me grow like him, when you are near me."

When he again talked of Mrs. Careless to-night, he seemed to have had his affection revived; for he said, "If I had married her, it might have been as happy for me." BOSWELL: "Pray, Sir, do you not suppose that there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy as with any one woman in particular." JOHNSON: "Ay, Sir, fifty thousand." BOSWELL: "Then, Sir, you are not of opinion with some who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other; and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts." JOHNSON: "To be sure not, Sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor, upon a due consideration of the characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter."

I wished to have stayed at Birmingham to-night, to have talked more with Mr. Hector; but my friend was impatient to reach his native city; so we drove on that stage in the dark, and were long pensive and silent. When we came within the focus of the Lichfield lamps, "Now," said he, "we are getting out of a state of death." We put up at the "Three Crowns," not one of the great inns, but a good old-fashioned one, which was kept by Mr. Wilkins, and was the very next



house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up, and which was still his own property.<sup>1</sup> We had a comfortable supper, and got



THE THREE CROWNS INN.

into high spirits. I felt all my Toryism glow in this old capital of Staffordshire. I could have offered incense *genio loci*; and I indulged in libations of that ale, which Boniface, in "The Beaux Stratagem," recommends with such an eloquent jollity.

Next morning he introduced me to Mrs. Lucy Porter, his step-daughter. She was now an old maid, with much simplicity of manner. She had never been in London. Her brother, a captain in the navy, had left her a fortune of ten thousand pounds, about a third of which she had laid out in building a stately house, and making a handsome garden, in an elevated situation in Lichfield. Johnson, when here by himself, used to live at her house. She revered him, and he had a parental tenderness for her.

We then visited Mr. Peter Garrick, who had that morning received a letter from his brother David, announcing our coming to Lichfield. He was engaged to dinner, but asked us to tea, and to sleep at his house. Johnson, however, would not quit his old acquaintance Wilkins, of the "Three Crowns." The family likeness of the Garricks was very

<sup>1</sup> I went through the house where my illustrious friend was born, with a reverence with which it doubtless will long be visited.—BOSWELL.

striking; and Johnson thought that David's vivacity was not so peculiar to himself as was supposed. "Sir," said he, "I don't know but if Peter had cultivated all the arts of gaiety as much as David has done, he might have been as brisk and lively. Depend upon it, Sir, vivacity is much an art, and depends greatly on habit." I believe there is a good deal of truth in this, notwithstanding a ludicrous story told me by a lady abroad, of a heavy German baron, who had lived much with the young English at Geneva, and was ambitious to be as lively as they; with which view, he, with assiduous attention, was jumping over the chairs and tables in his lodgings; and when the people of the house ran in and asked with surprise, what was the matter, he answered, "*Sh' apprens t'etre fif.*"



PABLOUR OF THE THREE CROWNS INN.

We dined at our inn, and had with us a Mr. Jackson, one of Johnson's schoolfellows, whom he treated with much kindness, though he seemed to be a low man, dull and untaught. He had a coarse grey coat, black waistcoat, greasy leather breeches, and a yellow uncurled wig; and his countenance had the ruddiness which betokens one who is in no haste to "leave his can." He drank only ale. He had tried to be a cutler at Birmingham, but had not succeeded; and now he lived poorly at home, and had some scheme of dressing leather in a better manner than common; to his indistinct account of which, Dr. Johnson listened with patient attention, that he might assist him with his advice.

Here was an instance of genuine humanity and real kindness in this great man, who has been most unjustly represented as altogether harsh and destitute of tenderness. A thousand such instances might have been recorded in the course of his long life; though that his temper was warm and hasty, and his manner often rough, cannot be denied.

I saw here, for the first time, *oat ale*; and oat cakes, not hard as in Scotland, but soft like Yorkshire cakes, were served at breakfast. It was pleasant to me to find, that "*Oats*," the "*food of horses*," were so much used as the *food of the people* in Dr. Johnson's own town. He expatiated in praise of Lichfield and its inhabitants, who, he said, were "the most sober, decent people in England, the genteelest in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English." I doubted as to the last article of this eulogy, for they had several provincial sounds; as *there* pronounced like *fear*, instead of like *fair*; *once* pronounced *woonse*, instead of *wunse*, or *wonse*. Johnson himself never got entirely free of those provincial accents. Garrick sometimes used to take him off, squeezing a lemon into a punch-bowl, with uncouth gesticulations, looking round the company, and calling out, "Who's for *poonsh*?"<sup>1</sup>

Very little business appeared to be going forward in Lichfield. I found, however, two strange manufactures for so inland a place, sail-cloth and streamers for ships; and I observed them making some saddle-cloths, and dressing sheep-skins; but, upon the whole, the busy hand of industry seemed to be quite slackened. "Surely, Sir," said I, "you are an idle set of people." "Sir" said Johnson, "we are a city of philosophers; we work with our heads, and make the boobies of Birmingham work for us with their hands."

There was at this time a company of players performing at Lichfield. The manager, Mr. Stanton, sent his compliments, and begged leave to wait on Dr. Johnson. Johnson received him very courteously, and he drank a glass of wine with us. He was a plain, decent, well-behaved man, and expressed his gratitude to Dr. Johnson for having once got him permission from Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne to play there upon moderate terms. Garrick's name was soon introduced. JOHNSON: "Garrick's conversation is gay and grotesque. It is a dish of all sorts, but all good things. There is no solid meat in it; there is a want of sentiment in it. Not but that he has sentiment sometimes, and sentiment, too, very powerful and very pleasing; but it has not its full proportion in his conversation."

When we were by ourselves he told me, "Forty years ago, Sir, I was in love with an actress here, Mrs. Emmet, who acted Flora in 'Hob in the Well.'" What merit this lady had as an actress, or what was

<sup>1</sup> Garrick himself, like the Lichfieldians, always said, *shupreme*, *shuperior*.—BURNET.

This is still the vulgar pronunciation of Ireland, where the pronunciation of the English language by those who have not expatriated, is doubtless that which generally prevailed in England in the time of Queen Elizabeth.—MALONE.

her figure or her manner, I have not been informed: but, if we may believe Mr. Garrick, his old master's taste in theatrical merit was by no means refined; he was not an *elegans formarum spectator*. Garrick used to tell that Johnson said of an actor, who played Sir Harry Wildair, at Lichfield, "There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow;" when, in fact, according to Garrick's account, "he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon boards."

We had promised Mr. Stanton to be at his theatre on Monday. Dr. Johnson jocularly proposed to me to write a Prologue for the occasion: "A Prologue, by James Boswell, Esq., from the Hebrides." I was really inclined to take the hint. Methought, "Prologue, spoken before Dr. Samuel Johnson at Lichfield, 1776," would have sounded as well as "Prologue, spoken before the Duke of York at Oxford," in Charles the Second's time. Much might have been said of what Lichfield had done for Shakspeare, by producing Johnson and Garrick. But I found he was averse to it.

We went and viewed the museum of Mr. Richard Green, apothecary here, who told me he was proud of being a relation of Dr. Johnson's. It was, truly, a wonderful collection, both of antiquities and natural curiosities, and ingenious works of art. He had all the articles accurately arranged, with their names upon labels, printed at his own little press; and on the staircase leading to it was a board, with the names of contributors marked in gold letters. A printed catalogue of the collection was to be had at a bookseller's. Johnson expressed his admiration of the activity and diligence and good fortune of Mr. Green, in getting together, in his situation, so great a variety of things; and Mr. Green told me that Johnson once said to him, "Sir, I should as soon have thought of building a man-of-war as of collecting such a museum." Mr. Green's obliging alacrity in showing it was very pleasing. His engraved portrait, with which he has favoured me, has a motto truly characteristic of his disposition, "*Nemo sibi vivat.*"

A physician being mentioned who had lost his practice, because his whimsically changing his religion had made people distrustful of him, I maintained that this was unreasonable, as religion is unconnected with medical skill. JOHNSON: "Sir, it is not unreasonable; for when people see a man absurd in what they understand, they may conclude the same of him in what they do not understand. If a physician were to take to eating of horse-flesh, nobody would employ him; though one may eat horse-flesh, and be a very skilful physician. If a man were educated in an absurd religion, his continuing to profess it would not hurt him, though his changing to it would."<sup>1</sup>

We drank tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, where was Mrs. Aston, one of the maiden sisters of Mrs. Walmsley, wife of Johnson's first

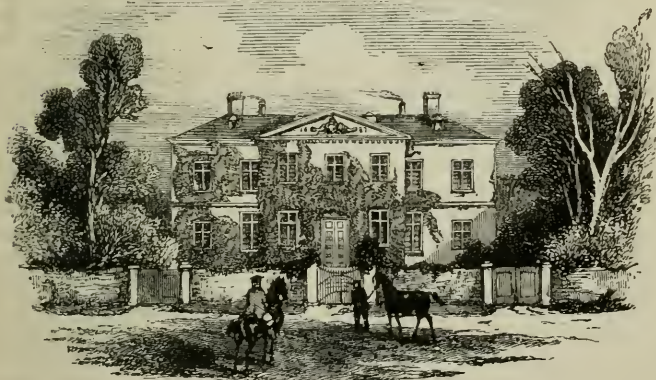
<sup>1</sup> Fothergill, a Quaker, and Schomberg, a Jew, had the greatest practice of any two physicians of their time.—BURNSEY.

friend, and sister also of the lady of whom Johnson used to speak with the warmest admiration, by the name of Molly Aston, who was afterwards married to Captain Brodie, of the navy.

On Sunday, March 24, we breakfasted with Mrs. Cobb, a widow lady who lived in an agreeable, sequestered place close by the town, called the Friary, it having been formerly a religious house. She and her niece, Miss Adey, were great admirers of Dr. Johnson; and he behaved to them with a kindness and easy pleasantry, such as we see between old and intimate acquaintance. He accompanied Mrs. Cobb to St. Mary's Church, and I went to the Cathedral, where I was very much delighted with the music, finding it to be peculiarly solemn, and accordant with the words of the service.

We dined at Mr. Peter Garrick's, who was in a very lively humour, and verified Johnson's saying, that if he had cultivated gaiety as much as his brother David, he might have equally excelled in it. He was to-day quite a London narrator, telling us a variety of anecdotes with that earnestness and attempt at mimicry, which we usually find in the wits of the metropolis. Dr. Johnson went with me to the Cathedral in the afternoon. It was grand and pleasing to contemplate this illustrious writer, now full of fame, worshipping in "the solemn temple" of his native city.

I returned to tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, and then found Dr. Johnson at the Rev. Mr. Seward's, Canon Residentiary, who



THE BISHOP'S PALACE, LICHFIELD.

inhabited the Bishop's palace, in which Mr. Walmsley lived, and which had been the scene of many happy hours in Johnson's early life. Mr. Seward had, with ecclesiastical hospitality and politeness, asked

me in the morning, merely as a stranger, to dine with him ; and in the afternoon, when I was introduced to him, he asked Dr. Johnson and me to spend the evening and sup with him. He was a genteel, well-bred, dignified clergyman, had travelled with Lord Charles Fitzroy, uncle of the present Duke of Grafton, who died when abroad, and he had lived much in the great world. He was an ingenious and literary man, had published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and written verses in Dodsley's collection. His lady was the daughter of Mr. Hunter, Johnson's first schoolmaster. And now, for the first time, I had the pleasure of seeing his celebrated daughter, Miss Anna Seward, to whom

I have since been indebted for many civilities, as well as some obliging communications concerning Johnson.

Mr. Seward mentioned to us the observations which he had made upon the strata of earth in volcanos, from which it appeared, that they were so very different in depth at different periods, that no calculation whatever could be made as to the time required for their formation. This fully refuted an anti-mosaical remark introduced into Captain Brydone's entertaining tour, I hope heedlessly, from a kind of vanity which is too common in those who have not sufficiently studied the most important of all subjects. Dr.

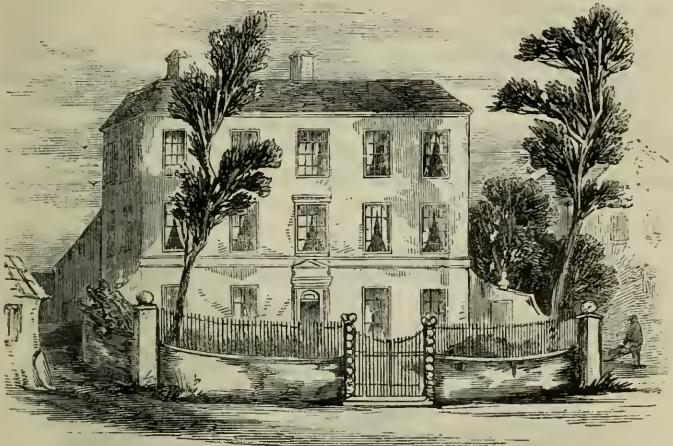


MISS ANNA SEWARD.

Johnson, indeed, had said before, independent of this observation, "Shall all the accumulated evidence of the history of the world—shall the authority of what is unquestionably the most ancient writing, be overturned by an uncertain remark such as this?"

On Monday, March 25, we breakfasted at Mrs. Lucy Porter's. Johnson had sent an express to Dr. Taylor's, acquainting him of our being at Lichfield, and Taylor had returned an answer that his post-chaise should come for us this day. While we sat at breakfast, Dr. Johnson received a letter by the post, which seemed to agitate him very much. When he had read it, he exclaimed, "One of the most dreadful things that has happened in my time." The phrase *my time*, like the word *age*, is usually understood to refer to an event of a public or general nature. I imagined something like an assassination of the King—like a gunpowder plot carried into execution—or like another fire of London. When asked, "What is it, Sir?" he answered, "Mr. Thrale has lost his only son!" This was, no doubt, a very great affliction to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, which their friends would consider accordingly ; but from the manner in which the intelligence of it was

communicated by Johnson, it appeared for the moment to be comparatively small. I, however, soon felt a sincere concern, and was curious to observe how Dr. Johnson would be affected. He said, "This



MRS. LUCY PORTER'S HOUSE.

is a total extinction to their family, as much as if they were sold into captivity." Upon my mentioning that Mr. Thrale had daughters, who might inherit his wealth, "Daughters," said Johnson, warmly, "he'll no more value his daughters than—" I was going to speak. "Sir," said he, "don't you know how you yourself think? Sir, he wishes to propagate his name." In short, I saw male succession strong in his mind, even where there was no name, no family of any long standing. I said, it was lucky he was not present when this misfortune happened. JOHNSON: "It is lucky for *me*. People in distress never think that you feel enough." BOSWELL: "And, Sir, they will have the hope of seeing you, which will be a relief in the meantime; and when you get to them, the pain will be so far abated, that they will be capable of being consoled by you, which, in the first violence of it, I believe would not be the case." JOHNSON: "No, Sir; violent pain of mind, like violent pain of body, *must* be severely felt." BOSWELL: "I own, Sir, I have not so much feeling for the distress of others as some people have, or pretend to have; but I know this, that I would do all in my power to relieve them." JOHNSON: "Sir, it is affectation to pretend to feel the distress of others as much as they do themselves. It is equally so, as if one should pretend to feel as much pain while a friend's leg is cutting off, as he does. No, Sir; you have expressed the rational and just nature of

sympathy. I would have gone to the extremity of the earth to have preserved this boy."

He was soon quite calm. The letter was from Mr. Thrale's clerk, and concluded, "I need not say how much they wish to see you in London." He said, "We shall hasten back from Taylor's."

Mrs. Lucy Porter, and some other ladies of the place, talked a great deal of him when he was out of the room, not only with veneration, but affection. It pleased me to find that he was so much *beloved* in his native city.

Mrs. Aston, whom I had seen the preceding night, and her sister, Mrs. Gastrel, a widow lady, had each a house and garden, and pleasure-ground, prettily situate upon Stowhill, a gentle eminence adjoining to



STOWHILL—RESIDENCES OF MRS. ASTON AND MRS. GASTREL.

Lichfield. Johnson walked away to dinner there, leaving me by myself, without any apology. I wonder at this want of that facility of manners, from which a man has no difficulty in carrying a friend to a house where he is intimate. I felt it very unpleasant to be thus left in solitude in a country town, where I was an entire stranger, and began to think myself unkindly deserted; but I was soon relieved, and convinced that my friend, instead of being deficient in delicacy, had conducted the matter with perfect propriety, for I received the following note in his handwriting:—

"Mrs. Gastrel, at the lower house on Stowhill, desires Mr. Boswell's company to dinner at two."



I accepted of the invitation, and had here another proof how amiable his character was in the opinion of those who knew him best. I was not informed till afterwards that Mrs. Gastrel's husband was the clergyman who, while he lived at Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was proprietor of Shakspeare's garden, with Gothic barbarity cut down his mulberry-tree,<sup>1</sup> and, as Dr. Johnson told me, did it to vex his neighbours. His lady, I have reason to believe, on the same authority, participated in the guilt of what the enthusiasts of our immortal bard deem almost a species of sacrilege.

After dinner, Dr. Johnson wrote a letter to Mrs. Thrale, on the death of her son. I said it would be very distressing to Thrale, but she would soon forget it, as she had so many things to think of. JOHNSON: "No, Sir, Thrale will forget it first. *She* has many things that she *may* think of. *He* has many things that he *must* think of." This was a very just remark upon the different effects of those light pursuits which occupy a vacant and easy mind, and those serious engagements which arrest attention, and keep us from brooding over grief.

He observed of Lord Bute, "It was said of Augustus, that it would have been better for Rome that he had never been born, or had never died. So it would have been better for this nation, if Lord Bute had never been minister, or had never resigned."

In the evening we went to the Town-hall, which was converted into a temporary theatre, and saw "Theodosius," with "The Stratford Jubilee." I was happy to see Dr. Johnson sitting in a conspicuous part of the pit, and receiving affectionate homage from all his acquaintance. We were quite gay and merry. I afterwards mentioned to him that I condemned myself for being so when poor Mr. and Mrs. Thrale were in such distress. JOHNSON: "You are wrong, Sir; twenty years hence Mr. and Mrs. Thrale will not suffer much pain from the death of their son. Now, Sir, you are to consider that distance of place, as well as distance of time, operates upon the human feelings. I would not have you be gay in the presence of the distressed, because it would shock them; but you may be gay at a distance. Pain for the loss of a friend, or of a relation whom we love, is occasioned by the want which we feel. In time the vacuity is filled with something else; or sometimes the vacuity closes up of itself."

Mr. Seward and Mr. Pearson, another clergyman here, supped with us at our inn. and after they left us we sat up late, as we used to do in London.

Here I shall record some fragments of my friend's conversation during this jaunt.

"Marriage, Sir, is much more necessary to a man than to a woman:

<sup>1</sup> See an accurate and animated statement of Mr. Gastrel's barbarity, by Mr. Malone, in a note on "Some account of the Life of William Shakspeare," prefixed to his admirable edition of that poet's works vol. i. p. 118.—BOSWELL.

for he is much less able to supply himself with domestic comforts. You will recollect my saying to some ladies the other day, that I had often wondered why young women should marry, as they have so much more freedom, and so much more attention paid to them while unmarried than when married. I indeed did not mention the *strong* reason for their marrying—the *mechanical* reason.” BOSWELL: “Why that is a strong one. But does not imagination make it much more important than it is in reality? Is it not, to a certain degree, a delusion in us as well as in women?” JOHNSON: “Why yes, Sir; but it is a delusion that is always beginning again.” BOSWELL: “I don’t know but there is upon the whole more misery than happiness produced by that passion.” JOHNSON: “I don’t think so, Sir.”

“Never speak of a man in his own presence. It is always indelicate, and may be offensive.”

“Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen. It is assuming a superiority, and it is particularly wrong to question a man concerning himself. There may be parts of his former life which he may not wish to be made known to other persons, or even brought to his own recollection.”

“A man should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time, but they will be remembered and brought out against him upon some subsequent occasion.”

“Much may be done if a man puts his whole mind to a particular object. By doing so, Norton<sup>1</sup> has made himself the great lawyer that he is allowed to be.”

I mentioned an acquaintance of mine, a sectary, who was a very religious man, who not only attended regularly on public worship with those of his communion, but made a particular study of the Scriptures, and even wrote a commentary on some parts of them, yet was known to be very licentious in indulging himself with women; maintaining that men are to be saved by faith alone, and that the Christian religion had not prescribed any fixed rule for the intercourse between the sexes. JOHNSON: “Sir, there is no trusting to that crazy piety.”

I observed that it was strange how well Scotchmen were known to one another in their own country, though born in very distant counties; for we do not find that the gentlemen of neighbouring counties in England are mutually known to each other. JOHNSON, with his usual acuteness, at once saw and explained the reason of this: “Why, Sir, you have Edinburgh, where the gentlemen from all your counties meet, and which is not so large but they are all known. There is no such common place of collection in England, except London, where from its

<sup>1</sup> Sir Fletcher Norton, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, and, in 1782, created Baron Grantly.—MALONE

great size and diffusion, many of those who reside in contiguous counties of England, may long remain unknown to each other."

On Tuesday, March 26, there came for us an equipage properly suited to a wealthy, well-beneficed clergyman: Dr. Taylor's large, roomy post-chaise, drawn by four stout, plump horses, and driven by two steady, jolly postilions, which conveyed us to Ashbourne; where I found my friend's schoolfellow living upon an establishment perfectly corresponding with his substantial, creditable equipage; his house, garden, pleasure-grounds, table—in short, everything good, and no scantiness appearing. Every man should form such a plan of living as he can execute completely. Let him not draw an outline wider than he can fill up. I have seen many skeletons of show and magnificence which excite at once ridicule and pity. Dr. Taylor had a good estate of his own, and good preferment in the church, being a prebendary of Westminster, and rector of Bosworth. He was a diligent justice of the peace, and presided over the town of Ashbourne, to the inhabitants of which I was told he was very liberal; and as a proof of this it was mentioned to me, he had the preceding winter distributed two hundred pounds among such of them as stood in need of his assistance. He had consequently a considerable political interest in the county of Derby, which he employed to support the Devonshire family; for though the schoolfellow and friend of Johnson, he was a Whig. I could not perceive in his character much congeniality of any sort with that of Johnson, who, however, said to me, "Sir, he has a very strong understanding." His size, and figure, and countenance, and manner, were that of a hearty English 'squire, with the parson superinduced; and I took particular notice of his upper-servant, Mr. Peters, a decent, grave man, in purple clothes, and a large white wig, like the butler or *major domo* of a bishop.

Dr. Johnson and Dr. Taylor met with great cordiality; and Johnson soon gave him the same sad account of their schoolfellow, Congreve, that he had given to Mr. Hector; adding a remark of such moment to the rational conduct of a man in the decline of life, that deserves to be imprinted upon every mind: "There is nothing against which an old man should be so much upon his guard as putting himself to nurse." Innumerable have been the melancholy instances of men once distinguished for firmness, resolution, and spirit, who in their latter days have been governed like children, by interested female artifice.

Dr. Taylor commended a physician who was known to him and Dr. Johnson, and said, "I fight many battles for him, as many people in the country dislike him." JOHNSON: "But you should consider, Sir, that by every one of your victories he is a loser; for every man of whom you get the better will be very angry, and resolve not to employ him; whereas, if people get the better of you in argument about him, they'll

think, 'We'll send for Dr. —, nevertheless.'" This was an observation deep and sure in human nature.

Next day we talked of a book in which an eminent judge was arraigned before the bar of the public, as having pronounced an unjust decision in a great cause. Dr. Johnson maintained that this publication would not give any uneasiness to the judge. "For," said he, "either he acted honestly, or he meant to do injustice. If he acted honestly his own consciousness will protect him; if he meant to do injustice, I will be glad to see the man who attacks him so much vexed."

Next day, as Dr. Johnson had acquainted Dr. Taylor of the reason for his returning speedily to London, it was resolved that we should set out after dinner. A few of Dr. Taylor's neighbours were his guests that day.

Dr. Johnson talked with approbation of one who had attained to the state of the philosophical wise man, that is, to have no want of anything. "Then, Sir," said I, "the savage is a wise man." "Sir," said he, "I do not mean simply being without, but not having a want." I maintained against this proposition, that it was better to have fine clothes, for instance, than not to feel the want of them. JOHNSON: "No, Sir; fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect. Was Charles the Twelfth, think you, less respected for his coarse blue coat and black stock? And you find the King of Prussia dresses plain, because the dignity of his character is sufficient. I here brought myself into a scrape, for I heedlessly said, "Would not *you*, Sir, be the better for velvet embroidery?" JOHNSON: "Sir, you put an end to all argument, when you introduce your opponent himself. Have you no better manners? There is *your want*." I apologised by saying, I had mentioned him as an instance of one who wanted: little as any man in the world, and yet, perhaps, might receive some additional lustre from dress.















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